

# MAN IN INDIA

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VOL. 49 } JULY-SEPT. 1969 { NO. 3

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## THE TRIBAL SITUATION

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**Abstract :** There is a difference between the way in which the tribal communities of India came into contact with their economically advanced neighbours in the past and are doing so today. The new conditions of massive and rapid confrontation with communities speaking other languages, and having a different way of life, has given rise to many of the problems facing the tribal people. Yet, the Constitution of India offers a solution to these problems if it is worked in the right way.

**T**HE tribal people of India, that is, those who have been listed as Scheduled Tribes, number nearly 30 million in a population of nearly 440 million. If the Scheduled Castes are also taken along with them, then the total comes up to nearly 100 million. This is a little more than the population of Japan ; but, in our country, this vast number is scattered all over the country. On the whole, it can be said that the Scheduled Tribes are poor ; live in the hills and forests in comparative isolation, where they have not become mixed up with other peasant communities in the plains. But even in the latter case, they occupy a rather lowly place in the social hierarchy.

Some social reformers are of opinion that economic development provides the key to human happiness. According

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Speech at the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, on 16 January 1969.

to their recommendation, if roads are opened in tribal areas, agriculture and industry properly developed, then our task will be done. But let us remember that, although economic prosperity is a very desirable thing, by itself it will not be able to bring about social equality. Social equality has to be established by specific programmes designed for its own sake.

Let us look at the condition of the U.S.A. The United States have an area of nearly three times that of India. In contrast, the population is 41 per cent of our country's population. The U.S.A. have enormous natural resources; its people are well educated, hard working; and they have been able to assure a standard of living to every one of its citizens which is far above that attained by other countries in the world. Yet, when it comes to human relations, we find unhappily that there are divisions between the White and the Negro, between the rich and the poor, which result in various kinds of tensions and conflicts.

The implication of this example is that, while, in India, we should take recourse to every method of raising production, we should, at the same time, try to reduce the gap which exists between town and country, and between the classes and the masses, if we are to use terms made familiar to us by Gandhiji himself. Both the programmes of economic development and of the establishment of social equality must be operated as an integrated whole.

In India, the 'tribal' people and those who are designated as 'civilized' have been in contact with one another for many centuries in the past. In some extraordinary places like the Andamans, there are tribal communities who live in complete isolation and live exclusively by hunting, fishing and gathering. But the total number of such completely isolated people would be perhaps four or five hundred only. By their means of production, such communities can perhaps support no more than three or four persons on every square mile of land; although by means of cultivation, animal husbandry and better methods of fishing, more than 200 people could be supported on every square mile of land in the same area,

Then there are some portions of India, where tribal communities depend upon shifting cultivation, without the use of the plough, or animals for traction. In N.E.F.A., Nagaland and some of the more isolated parts of Orissa or Assam and Madhya Pradesh we come across tribal communities of this kind. Some observations have been made about these people, and it has been found that, at their best, they can support from 20 to 30 persons per square mile by means of the technique of cultivation and food production known to them.

It is interesting that in both N.E.F.A. or the Mizo Hills district of Assam the actual density of population is lower than the number which can be supported by shifting cultivation. But in the district of Keonjhar in Orissa, where one section of the Juang tribe lives by shifting cultivation, the problem is very acute. While only 20 or more people can be supported by shifting cultivation, the actual number living on each square mile of land which was investigated, was in the neighbourhood of 70. The Bonda Poroja or the Koya who live in the district of Koraput in Orissa are likewise in a deplorably poor condition. It was discovered by a team of medical men in one school in this area that 98 per cent of the children suffer from hookworm and anaemia ; while, among the adults, the incidence of tuberculosis is as high as 2.4 per cent.

It is under such conditions that many of our countrymen live. The schemes of economic development organized by the Government do not often reach these lowliest of lowly people. And yet they have to live, and find a solution for their problems as best they can.

In ancient times, these tribal communities did come into contact with the neighbouring peasant and artisan folk of the plains and river valleys. They were often attracted by the comparative prosperity of the latter. In many cases, the tribal folk specialized, after such contact, in the production of goods based upon the resources available in their forest dwellings, and sold them to the peasant folk for money, or bartered them for paddy or millets.

After such contact, which deepened in course of time, some

families among the tribal people also learnt or adopted better methods of cultivation, and even began to worship some of the gods and goddesses worshipped by their more prosperous neighbours. In course of time, their neighbours, who lived under the caste system and were served by Brahmin priests and teachers, adopted them as a caste within Hindu society. It was however unfortunate that the caste to which the absorbed tribal folk were relegated was generally a lowly one, except in the case of a few ruling or prosperous families who were regarded as Kshatriyas.

Formerly, as we have said, one person, two persons, one family, two families came into contact with their Hindu neighbours; and in course of time became attached to the Hindu economic system, and then were absorbed within the social fold also. The tension between one section of the people and another was hardly of a serious nature; because none was very poor, and none very rich. Moreover, while the tribal folk were attracted by the gods and goddesses of the Hindus, the latter, on their part, quite often adopted the gods and goddesses of the tribal people as well. Even after social incorporation, the tribal people could continue to worship their earlier gods and goddesses without let or hindrance.

It was in this manner that the ranks of the Brahminical people became swollen. The cultural distinction between the absorbed and the absorbing communities also tended to become indistinct on account of mutual give and take. There was however no intermarriage between various groups which made up Hindu society. So that although distinctnesses were preserved through the rule of endogamy, yet distances between different elements were not sharpened.

The picture that we have drawn above is, of course, a simplified outline, and it belongs more or less to the past. But what is happening today in India is very different from this; and we shall now try to present a simplified picture of that also.

In contrast to what took place in the past, the contact of tribal people with the dwellers of the plains and plateaux is



taking place on a massive scale. New roads are being built in all parts of India, mines and factories are being opened in the heart of the isolated areas formerly inhabited by tribal people or peasant communities, from whom they do not differ very seriously. But, today, when a steel mill is opened in a place like Rourkela or a mine as in Balimela in Orissa, the tribal folk are suddenly brought face to face with a technology which they do not understand. Moreover, when, in order to work these industries, labourers are brought in from Bihar, Andhra Pradesh or Madhya Pradesh in large numbers, the tribal people see the sharp difference between themselves and the new-comers in a way that they had never experienced in the days of slow infiltration in the past. The language, costumes, ways of life of the new-comers who work in the mines and factories are new, and the tribes become increasingly conscious of their difference in all respects from the culture of those who have quickly intruded into their homeland on such a massive scale. The cultural polarity between the two contrasting communities tends to become sharpened under the present situation ; whereas, in the past, the slow process led to progressive reduction of the cultural contrast.

This increasing consciousness of contrast leads the tribal people to preserve their own identity and distinctness by an overvaluation of some of the items of their own culture. When they are not completely swamped over, or widely scattered under the stress of the industrial economy, they tend to seek their own solidarity by over-emphasizing those elements of their culture which mark them off from their neighbours.

The same thing happens to Indian emigrants in America. Unless they are completely americanized, they tend to hold on to their Indian-ness with greater fervour than they ever do at home.

When the tribal people are driven into a revivalist spirit towards their own culture in this manner, there also develop certain important political results out of it. When the tribal communities feel that they are being thrown out of their established economic security, and set adrift to adapt them-

selves to the new industrial system as best they can, they feel injured, and by and by begin to think of what they should do under the circumstances.

Fortunately for us, it was largely under Gandhiji's inspiration and advice that the Constitution of India adopted adult franchise as the foundation on which to build up Indian democracy. Slowly, the tribal folk are becoming more and more conscious of their new political power, particularly when they are approached by various political parties for votes. They also have begun to realize that, through a reservation of seats in the State Legislatures and the Parliament, they can now make their voice heard before the rest of their countrymen.

So that through the massive nature of the contact to which tribes are subjected today, and through access to political power under the Constitution, the situation which has arisen in the matter of relationship between the tribal and non-tribal people is of a radically different kind than what it was ever in the past.

Meanwhile, one has to remember that India has set its mind to the establishment of equality of opportunity in the economic, political and social fields through democratic means. Our old caste-based productive system still thrives in large parts of India in a modified form, while a new economy, based on modern technology and guided by the ideal of equality, is slowly taking its place. Social change, in the past, has been very unequal in different parts of India, and also unequal among different classes of the population within the same area. And those who have been least subjected to the processes of adaptation to a modern economy have been the Scheduled Tribes and the Scheduled Castes.

Most of the problems by which India is faced today, most of the tensions to which India is also subject, can be traced largely to this inequality of social and economic change. However difficult our task may be, India is determined to face the challenge, and progress towards her accepted goal.

Just as a mother who has several children devotes more attention to an ailing child or one that is weak, in the same

manner the Constitution of India has provided that it will look with greater care, and spend proportionately more money and give more services to those communities which have so long been lagging behind.

It is from this point of view that we must look at the problems which beset our brothers belonging to the tribal communities. If we realize the experiences of comparative isolation in the past, and their massive confrontation by a completely new economy which has come into the land, when we realize that they have been neglected in education and economic development, we must learn to appreciate their sorrows and difficulties. And we must also face the challenge, and take upon ourselves the responsibility of wiping out the distance that separates the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes from the rest of the Indian community within the shortest practicable time.

It is then only that India can rise to the glory with which Gandhiji dreamt of endowing our land.

# THE PARATAVAR : 2000 YEARS OF CULTURE DYNAMICS OF A TAMIL CASTE

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**Abstract.** This article studies the changes that have come about in the Paratavar caste over the last two thousand years. This caste engages in fishing and trading on the southern Tamilnadu coast. Classical Tamil literature and other sources suggest how the caste was formed. Five different phases of acculturation can be traced, involving five major religions. The conclusions are that from an ethno-historical viewpoint, caste in South India is an adaptive, responsive, dynamic social institution.

IT is possible to make ethno-historical studies of certain castes in South India covering a time span of two thousand years. Tamil literary sources go back to the Sangam period, the first three centuries A.D. Because the literature of this period has not been subject to significant interpolation in the succeeding centuries, the origin and development of the institution of caste in the Tamil country can be determined with less speculation than for most other parts of India. The two major Tamil epics are literary sources for the early mediaeval centuries, and there is a large body of religious literature from later countries. The development of institutionalized caste in the Tamil region was much like that in the rest of South Asia. Some modern scholars, projecting into the past their current views of how society ought to be, deny that there were castes in the Sangam period. However, whether or not the word 'caste' is used, it is obvious that ancient Tamil society was subdivided into a large number of groups into which a person obtained membership by birth. There are dozens of castes mentioned in Sangam literature,

such as Maravar, Malavar, Palaiyar, Aruvalar, Oliyar, Kadambar Velir, Brahmins and Paratavar. Many are obviously geographical and could be thought of as tribes or minor dynasties, but others are occupational, such as smiths, carpenters, fishers, and warriors.

This propensity for society to be divided into multifarious endogamous units is the raw material from which formal caste hierarchy was constructed all over India. This has been a pan-Indian feature from before Aryan influence down to the present, and the phenomenon does not require apology by anthropologist or historian. A reliable and datable literary source for studying these sub-sections of society before they became highly stratified in a hierarchy supported by religious authority, is classical Tamil literature of the first three centuries, particularly that classified under the category of *puram*.

Until recent years, anthropologists have concentrated on the study of castes as discrete, fixed, social units. This predilection stemmed in part from the need of British administrators to categorize people in manageable units, and these were then perceived as relatively clear-cut, fixed social entities, each with its status established. A study of particular castes in the Tamil region for two thousand years will confirm what several anthropologists are today stressing : that caste is a dynamic system. Far from stifling culture change, caste may be shown to have at times abetted change, because a segment of the population is free to change without being bound by the norms of the population as a whole. This is true historically, as well as in the context of modern politics and economics. As merchants, Brahmins, Muslim traders, and Europeans successively tried to solidify the existing castes into a hierarchy favourable to themselves, differential acculturation was inevitable. The direction and rate of acculturation of each caste or group changed with each successive intrusive influence in South India, most of which appeared first along the coasts.

The Tamil caste selected for this study is the Paratavar, who live today on the southern coast of Tamilnadu. Literary

references to this caste can be traced back about two thousand years. Sections of this caste have tried to emulate the ways of life of successive dominant cultural currents that have washed over the southern Pandiyan coast. Five phases of the culture dynamics of the Paratavar can be identified. They first became acculturated in the direction of the Indian Great Tradition and Brahminism, and, secondly, in the direction of mercantilism and the Cettis. Thirdly, they succumbed in part to Muslim influence, and fourthly to Portuguese Catholicism. Now they are being acculturated anew by the prevailing forces of modern Indian society. Here is an example of caste as a dynamic institution.

The Tamil Paratavar are found today all along the southern coast of Tamilnadu, and some are in north-western Ceylon. They are also found in coastal regions where other languages are spoken : Sinhala, Malayalam, Tulu, and Kannada. The core of the caste, however, is found in coastal villages from Cape Comorin to beyond Ramesvaram. These people are generally thought of as fisher folk, but the Tamil Paratavar engage in considerable commerce and shipping.

The modern name is Paravar, but in literature they are referred to as Paratar. Tamil scholars have postulated an etymology for this word, deriving it from *paravai*, 'something expansive' or 'sea'. This is a fanciful derivation, for the caste is mentioned in Tamil Sangam literature about forty-six times, and in every instance it is Paratavar except two, which have it as Paratar. Therefore the word is from *Parata* (the final *r* being the human plural suffix, the *va* a euphonic infix, and *Paravar* being a modern contraction). *Parata* is the Tamil rendering of Sanskrit *Bharata* and Prakrit or Sinhalese *Barata*. The opinion of some scholars to the contrary, this caste must have taken its name from Bharata, even though they are fisher folk.

Epigraphical data from Ceylon show that Bharata was a prestige title in the island in the third to first centuries B. C. Many Buddhist caves were donated by persons bearing this title, whose names are memorialized in early Brahmi script over the caves. Most of these are around Anuradhapura and

Mihintale in the north of the island, but some are in the south-east also.<sup>1</sup>

The names of these individuals bearing the title *Bharata* are generally Hindu names, such as were common to the proto-Saivism or early Hinduism of Ceylon. Some of them (in Ceylon Prakrit form) are *Barata Mahatisa*, *Barata Sumana*, *Barata Utara Kasaba*, and *Barata Ahali*. Usually the title *Bharata* is shortened to *Bata*, found with names such as *Abaya*, *Upasona*, *Vahaba*, *Siva*, *Devatisa*, *Sivaguta*, *Citaguta*, and *Tisabutiya*. There were also some Buddhists with this title, including *Budarakita*, and *Damaguta*.

These were persons of high social standing. The word *Bharata* here may be translated as 'lord'. Two of them were reciters of scripture, two were *theras*, and two were *gahapatis*. The high status of these people can also be inferred in that they were able to donate caves to religious orders, thus emulating the king and his family.

None of these individuals is specified as a Tamil, but an inscription in Anuradhapura reads, 'The terrace of the Tamil householder caused to be made by the Tamil Samana (residing) in Ilubarata'.<sup>2</sup> Nearby is a large platform, with post-holes in rock, and the names of six Tamils are inscribed behind, each above his section of the excavated rock terrace. The names are Prakrit, not Tamil, which indicates an early response by Tamils to forces of culture emanating ultimately from North India. Ilubarata is not identifiable, but if an affluent Tamil lived there, it is likely that the title *Barata* was used and regarded by Tamils as well as by the Simhalas. We know from several other inscriptions of about the second century B. C. that there were Tamil merchants, ship captains, and religious figures in northern Ceylon at that time; indeed, one of these six Tamils who used this terrace is specified as a ship captain.

The Pandiyan dynasty originated on the southern coast of Tamilnadu, as did the basic elements of civilization of the early Tamils (civilization being defined as including urbanization and literacy). The first two capitals of the Pandiyas were near the mouth of the Tambaraparani River, on the Gulf of Mannar. The Pandiyas were established there in the fourth

century B. C., Tamil civilization having developed on that coast due to the cultural stimulus of early Indian coastal sea traffic. The Pandiyas moved their capital inland to present Madurai by the second century B. C. because of fear of invasion from Ceylon. These points have not been much discussed in standard works touching on early South Indian history, but there is sufficient evidence to believe that the Pandiyan dynasty and its traditions originated on the southern coast, opposite Ceylon.<sup>3</sup>

The original Tamil civilization of the Pandiyan region developed largely as a result of early cultural influences originating in Gujarat and Sindhu, which impinged on the whole coast of peninsular India and Ceylon. The Pandiyan dynasty was a collateral of an early line of Pandu princes of pre-Buddhist Ceylon. The name Tambaraparani had its counterpart in the name of Tambapanni, earliest known city of the island, and these two early capitals were on opposite sides of the pearl-rich Indo-Ceylon straits. The name of Madurai, capital of the Pandiyas, was taken from Mathura of the North, which name was also found in early Ceylon. There are many other parallels between the two dynastic traditions. The Paratavar claimed to be Kshatriyas and thought of themselves as associated with the Pandiyas, but at the same time they seem to have had close relations with early Ceylon, as their own traditions relate. It is not coincidental that they took the prestige name *Bharata* about the time that this was a popular title in Ceylon, in the third and second centuries B. C.

Thurston relates the traditions of the Paratavar regarding their own origin. They claim to have come from Ayodhya, and were of the race of Varuna. Their main deities have been Varuna, Karttikeya, and Siva, rather than the indigenous Tamil deities worshipped by inland people such as the Velir in Sangam times. The Paratavar say that at the close of the last *kalpa*, when the whole earth was covered with a deluge, they constructed a boat, and by it escaped the flood. When dry land appeared, they settled on the spot where their boat (*toni*) rested, which place they called Tonipuram.<sup>4</sup> The credible elements of this tradition are that the dominant core



of the Paratavar originally immigrated to the Pandiyan coast by ship, and that the caste essentially revered the Indian Great Tradition and all its appurtenances going back to north-western India.

There are many other traditions connecting this caste with Ceylon. Even today, the Paratavar say that when the Simhalas came to Ceylon, one branch of them settled in the island, and another branch settled on the southern Tamilnadu coast and became the Paratavar. The main errors in this are that such traditions overlook the fact that immigrants are generally very few in number compared with the local people who were absorbed into the new tradition or caste, and secondly, the belief that the original Simhalas came from Bengal, whereas it is known now that they came from the west. The latter error was precipitated by the Ceylon Buddhist predilection for the east, and by the volume of ship traffic along India's east coast during and after Mauryan times. The Paratavar have a saying, 'Simhala people are like our people', and this appears to have some truth to it, even as regards physical features. The Indian Paratavar can marry the Paratavar of northern Ceylon, as well as the Sinhalese, and they also use some vocabulary borrowed from Sinhalese.

Turning now to the early literary evidence, we find that the Sangam poems of the first three centuries contain many references to this caste. Superficial reading of these references may lead one to suppose that the Paratavar were only a very low fishing caste, in contradiction to the above traditions. This literature describes the Paratavar children as having unoiled hair and wearing green leaves.<sup>5</sup> Their miserable villages on the sandy coast, where stinking fish are laid out to dry, are contrasted with the finery of the lover-hero of the poem, who comes in a chariot, and is from a venerable town which has shops on the streets where many carts stand.<sup>6</sup> The Paratavar go out to sea before daybreak in boats with upturned ends, and catch fish by the aid of shining lights.<sup>7</sup> They are physically strong as a result of their fishing work, and like strong liquor.<sup>8</sup> They plant in the sand the sword of a sword-

fish, and revere it.<sup>9</sup> After a day's work they are happy, and play around ; they also sing.<sup>10</sup> The maidens are so attractive that they are caught by the eyes of a visitor as fish are caught in a net.<sup>11</sup> In Sangam literature they are often mentioned in connexion with idyllic scenes of the coastal country, a rustic and happy people.<sup>12</sup> This is a literary convention of the period, and should be read as such rather than as objective description.

We get a different picture of the Paratavar from other passages. We see that some are well-to-do merchants and shippers, and live in fine coastal cities. They fish for pearls and conches, and market them, controlling this industry.

Glittering pearls from the roaring ocean,  
 Conch bangles cut straight to the eye, and filed, and  
 Many other good products are handled by Paratar ;  
 From black lowland plots sour tamarind, white salt, and  
 On mounds on the wide beach, by strong-armed boatmen  
 Fat fish sliced in pieces like eyes on a drumhead ;  
 These are taken by captains of fine ocean vessels  
 To distant foreign countries—also gems that are bartered  
 For horses, and other things brought in abundance.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the Paratavar not only traded in pearls and rare right-whorled conches, but also in cut bangles, tamarind, salt, fish, gems, and horses. They tended their horses carefully, because they were imported, feeding them white rice flour floating on curds.<sup>14</sup> They also imported from some place north a sort of round white stone, and sandalwood.<sup>15</sup>

The Paratavar were also a military force of some importance. On one occasion they came from the south and threatened the Colas at the same time that the Colas were besieged by the Telugus.<sup>16</sup> They had their own 'king', who had an army of spearmen, and who lived in the port town of Kalkai. But some of them lived at the important port of Korkai, and sung praises of the Pandiyan king, whose viceroyalty it was.<sup>17</sup>

Tamils were in the horse-importing business since 200 B.C. or earlier, according to both inscriptional and literary evidence from Ceylon, and Sindhu horses were highly valued in that

island well before the time of Christ.<sup>18</sup> South India has imported horses from the Gujarat and Sindhu coasts throughout recorded history, because the climate of the South is not conducive to the breeding of these animals. Monarchs residing in the inland capitals of the Pandiyas and Colas relied on such commercial castes as the Paratavar to import horses for them. According to one classical poem, the east coast Paratavar were famous for the fine horses which they imported from the North :

Enter Nirppeyal port's boundary. There milk-like  
White maned horses arrive, with riches from the North,  
In ships standing out in the cool ocean by the sea-front.  
On sandy roads stand high-storeyed buildings  
Of numerous Paratavar, occupying many streets,  
And towering great warehouses which workmen guard.

\* \* \* \* \*

There a tower, a pillar holding up the heavens,  
Its summit reached toiling up a leaning ladder,  
High terraced, without thatching, scrapes the sky.  
At night its kindled light shows to approaching  
Vessels groping o'er the deep, the shore.  
They pass the port by and go on their way.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, the chief citizenry of this port (perhaps identifiable with Mahabalipuram) were Paratavar, who not only imported horses and valuable goods from the North, but maintained high-storeyed houses, great warehouses, and also a lighthouse.

How is it, then, that this caste is portrayed so often as poor fisher folk living in miserable villages, whereas at the same time some of them were townsmen and prosperous importers? For one thing, most of the *puram* poems of the Sangam literature are set in one of five types of landscapes, of which the sea coast, *neytal*, is the setting here. Each landscape is associated with a particular aspect of love, a tree, a flower, a bird, a season, and a characteristic people, which in the case of *neytal*, is the Paratavar. This literary convention might have been formalized even before the Sangam poetry we possess was written. However, it seems that the poems mentioning the

Paratavar as living in mansions and conducting far-reaching trade, were apparently written during the latter part of the Sangam period.

In any case, we have here an instance of caste as a dynamic institution at this early period. The original fisher folk, who served as the poetic idyllic type, were politically and economically dominated by an immigrant group into which they were eventually assimilated, taking the name of Bharata, and forming a new caste. No doubt an important attraction in this case was control of the pearl trade. If the Ceylon epigraphical material presented above is relevant, and if their own traditions have any validity, the core immigrant group had some connexion with Ceylon, as did the Pandiyas also.

This type of social process was repeated every time a new dominant cultural element washed the Pandiyan and Cola coasts. Throughout India this type of social change has been the norm rather than the exception. Acculturation was not always in the direction of Sanskritization; in this case, it might be called Prakritization. In this example, we see caste as an adapting, responsive, social institution, a mechanism for facilitating acculturation.

K. A. Nilakanta Sastri refers to what he calls 'dynastic drift' to explain the appearance in India's south and east, of dynastic names and traditions which originated in the north-west. In the same way, there has been a drifting of caste names and traditions, so that specific castes are found over very large areas. A large transfer of population is not implied, but a new social unit can form around the nucleus of a very few intrusive individuals, who provide a prestige name and a pattern for acculturation. The process is the same for a dynasty and for a caste, for those taking the names Pandiya and Bharata. The coastal fishermen of the south were particularly vulnerable to intrusive influences because the strongest influences in the early historical South and Ceylon came by sea. The formation of these coastal fishermen into the Paratavar caste was the first of five distinct stages of acculturation. In subsequent centuries some of them took

up the traditions of Cettis, later some as Muslims, then as Catholics, and now as citizens of modern India.

The Paratavar must have begun forming as a caste a century or two before the time of Christ, since it was spread along much of the Tamil coast and was quite diversified by the time of Sangam literature. Moreover, the second century B. C. was the time when the popularity of the title Bharata as seen in Ceylonese inscriptions, reached its apex. Probably it was in the early second century B.C. that the Pandiyas moved their capital inland to the present site of Madurai,<sup>20</sup> which would have left room for the political and economic development of the Paratavar along the coast. The chief port of the Pandiyan coast, according to Sangam literature, was Korkai, at the mouth of the Tambaraparani. There were numerous Paratavar living there, and it was the centre of the pearl trade. Because of the wealth of this port and because of the pearl trade, it was the seat of the Pandiyan viceroyalty.<sup>21</sup> About half the references to Korkai in the classical literature mention it in the context of adulation of the riches of the Pandiyan king at Madurai.

Though South India has had few castes that claimed to be Kshatriyas, because the four-class system was not very successfully superimposed, the Paratavar imitated the Pandiyan dynasty by claiming Kshatriya status. Thurston's article on the Paravar records that they eat only with Brahmins because they claim to be Kshatriyas of the Pandiyan line. They also claim to be of the Lunar Race, as do the Pandiyas. Tradition says that the Sangam poet Nakkirar was a Paratavan (perhaps because the two earliest Pandiyan capitals together with their literary academies, were supposed to have been on the southern coast). The Paratavar worshipped the deities of the Indian Great Tradition, which were the same as those generally revered in pre-Buddhist Ceylon, whereas, according to Sangam literature, most of the Tamil people worshipped indigenous deities not yet well assimilated into formal Hinduism. Varuna, Karttikeya, Siva, Manu, and the palmyra palm (also revered in pre-Buddhist Ceylon) were the deities of the Paratavar (though in mediaeval centuries

they also took up the worship of such popular Tamil deities as Kannaki and Mangai). Varuna, lord of the sea, has always been popular among them because of the occupations they pursued. It is claimed that Minaksi, consort of Siva and chief deity of the main temple of the Pandiyas at Madurai, was born as the daughter of a fisherman chief. The deities and traditions of the dominant elements of the caste were superimposed over the beliefs of the indigenous fisher folk who were absorbed into it.

A new pattern of acculturation of this caste may be observed to have occurred on the Cola coast in mediaeval centuries, which culminated in the assimilation of the Paratavar into Cetti castes and the consequent disappearance of identifiable Paratavar fishermen along that coast. The *Cilappatikaram*, oldest of the two epics as they stand, has a number of references to Paratar and Paratavar. It shows them to have been the dominant trading caste in the port of Kaverippattinam; the poem opens with a description of the prosperous city in which the rich Paratar are prominent. Their sons mingle in the streets with princes. The hero of the epic, Kovalan, had the name Paratar, which he gave up after he went to Madurai; significantly, he was born of a merchant family. However, the Paratavar are also portrayed in the epic as fishers living in hamlets, employing small boats and nets in their trade;<sup>22</sup> so we get the same disparate picture of them as we do from Sangam literature.

By the seventh century the merchant Paratavar of the east coast had become absorbed into, or evolved into, Cetti castes. Cettis took their name from Pali *setthi* (ultimately from *sres-thin*), a money-lender, banker, or trader. The Buddhist Pali works mention *setthi* traders who came to the South by sea, and also refer to the Cola port of Kaverippattinam. The *Manimekalai* describes this great port, and indicates that Buddhists flourished there in early mediaeval centuries; it also refers to Cetti traders. This epic is of Buddhist inspiration.

The influence of Buddhism was strong because of the heavy ship traffic between Bengal and Ceylon, but as the Colas became economically aggressive as a Hindu power, the

Paratavar who had become Buddhists apparently reverted to Hinduism. The modern Nattukkottai Cettis, prominent merchants of the central eastern Tamilnadu coast, claim to be descendants of the prosperous merchants of Kaverippattinam. They have long since shaken off the stigma of association with Paratavar fishermen. Many of the latter also seem to have been identified with other castes, and those who are still acknowledged to be Paratavar, as at Nagappattinam, actually prefer to call themselves Cettis, even though they may not engage in commerce. They feel equal to the Cettis of the towns, and refuse to give their daughters in marriage to fishermen of other fishing castes, such as the Padaiyacci.

On the Pandiyan coast, however, the Paratavar retained their identity as a caste, and were able to form their own strong commercial and political establishment. Though a few individuals here also are known to have taken the name Cetti, on the whole, Brahminical aspects of the old Paratavar traditions were emphasized. They had their own 'kings', often under the hegemony of the Pandiyas. Their capital at one time was Mangai, now displaced by the neighbouring town of Ramanatapuram. One of their ports was located near Muttupettai at the mouth of the Vaigai River, and one may pick up from the ruins there pottery fragments of Persian, Arab, and Chinese origin. The prosperous descendants of those merchants can be seen today in coastal towns such as Kulasekarappattinam, Virapandiyappattinam, Tirucendur, Korkai, Kayalpattinam, Mukkur, Kilakkarai, and Muttupettai. These towns on the pearl-fishing beds of the Gulf of Mannar carried on trade with distant points on both sides of the Indian Ocean. Under these conditions, there was no felt need for the Paratavar merchants to undergo a metamorphosis of caste, and there was no need for emulation of a new or intrusive set of ideals.

By the thirteenth century the Arabs were trading in all parts of the Indian Ocean, and the ports at the extremity of the Indian peninsula and in Ceylon were frequently visited by them and by Indian Muslims, who established their commercial empire in Malaysia and Indonesia. Moreover, the Delhi

Sultanate began to impinge on the South in the thirteenth century, and in 1311 Malik Kafur invaded the Pandiyan territory, causing Sundara Pandiya to temporarily abandon his capital, Madurai. Though the Pandiyan kings maintained a palace at Korkai on the coast, as they had done for centuries, they failed to defend the town. (The ruins of the 'palace' can be seen at Korkai today, in the matrix of which are many shell ornaments, mediaeval coins, and beads.) Before the forces of Sundara Pandiya rallied and repulsed the Muslims, Malik Kafur's army had raided Korkai of most of its jewels and valuables.

The appearance of the apparently superior economic and military strength of the Muslims set in motion a new direction of acculturation among some of the Paratavar. They could not really compete with the Muslim traders because of the wide geographical expansion of the Muslims. Even local trade with Malabar and Ceylon came to be dominated by Muslims with their more efficient navigation techniques. Some of the Paratavar found it expedient to adopt the cultural appurtenances of this new force, and became Muslims. There was also intermarriage between resident Muslim merchants and Paratavar women. As the old port of Palaiyakayal at the mouth of the Tambaraparani silted up, a new town of Kayal was established as a Muslim town, as it is today.

Though the Paratavar fishermen and some of the traders remained Hindu, those who perceived it was desirable to put on the trappings of Islam then developed a complete new mythology which superseded all the Hindu traditions of Bharata, Varuna, and the Kshatriyas. According to this new mythology, Ceylon was the original Garden of Eden, evidence of which is that Adam's Peak is located there. When Adam fled from the Garden, he came across to India by the chain of sand-bars called Adam's Bridge. Tamil, of course, was the original language of the Garden of Eden. If further proof is needed that the setting of the early events of Genesis was in this region, one can see the tombs of Cain and Abel a short distance from Ramesvaram, a spot that has since been corrupted by association with the Hindu myth of Rama and



Sita. Noah escaped the Flood in a *marakkalam* ('wooden ship') hence the name of the Muslim merchant caste of Marakkarayar, who are directly descended from Noah. Even the Muslims in Kashmir use wooden ships as a result of these events. After this, Tamils went by ship and settled in Calcutta, Malabar coast, South-east Asia, and other distant coasts. Later Solomon visited South India by ship and gave his name (Suleiman) to Citambaram (Chidambaram). Solomon imported South Indian gold and peacocks, hence he had a peacock throne. Ophir, Solomon's source of gold, is Korkai, on the Tambaraparani mouth.

This mythology, adapted from the Arab Muslim Great Tradition, enabled those Paratavar who adopted Islam to disassociate themselves from the poor Paratavar fisher folk, and helped them acquire the status and economic benefits associated with the strongest cultural force yet to appear on the southern Indian coast. Whereas the caste of Paratavar on the Cola coast had largely been absorbed into other castes, those on the Pandiyan coast now split into two castes, Muslim and Hindu.

A new phase of Paratavar history began after the Portuguese established themselves in Malabar and began offering competition to the Arabs or Muslims for control of the sea trade. Many of the Hindu Paratavar found themselves dispossessed of their traditional trade routes, their fisheries and especially their pearling monopoly. They therefore deputed some of their leaders to Cochin in 1532 to persuade the Portuguese to help fend off further Muslim encroachment. The emissaries found it expedient to become baptized by the Vicar-General of the Bishop of Goa, who gave them Portuguese names. The Portuguese then dispatched a ship and some troops, who successfully halted the economic oppression of the Paratavar by the Muslims.

Priests who accompanied the Portuguese succeeded in baptizing numbers of Hindus in the Pandiyan coastal villages. In 1542 Francis Xavier arrived in Tuticorin, and though he did not speak Tamil, he memorized enough prayers and creeds in the language to minister, and visited over thirty Paratavar

villages which he found along the coast from Cape Comorin to beyond Ramesvaram. The entire Paratavar caste in these and other villages then became Catholic.<sup>28</sup> The new religion stuck in spite of attempts by the Dutch to convert them to Protestantism after gaining control of Ceylon; for by this time the Paratavar were prosperous, managed their pearl markets well, and had trade contacts with much of the Indian coast as well as with distant points of the Christian world.

Roman Catholicism was superimposed on the Paratavar Hindu beliefs in ways paralleled by the successful propagation of the Iberian religion in so many other parts of the world. Indigenous deities became Catholic saints, the traditional sacred spots became sites for churches, and lucky symbols such as the conch shell continued to be venerated. A new Great Tradition had been adopted, replacing the Pandiyan-linked Hindu mythology. All the converts adopted Portuguese surnames, which they retain to this day. Most of those who claimed the Hindu Paratavar traditions wilfully gave them up in favour of the new Iberian mythology, setting in motion a new direction of acculturation which has provided many of the ideals of the folk of the coastal villages for over four centuries.

Within the last few decades the Paratavar have been subjected to a different set of acculturating forces. Though they pride themselves on their Portuguese nomenclature and Catholic faith, it is obvious to them that a new set of values determines the status of the group today: obtaining an education, building houses with cement, and acquiring mechanized fishing boats. As usual, the poorer fishing segments of the caste continue to take their cues from the richer merchants whose fine houses may be seen in the coastal towns, oblivious that this is the fifth major change in the direction of acculturation of that caste in that region.

In conclusion, the Paratavar 'caste' was originally formed by the merger of diverse trading and fishing groups, then split several times, and lost large segments as new castes were formed and sections changed status in caste hierarchy. Four great religions were successively taken up, each with its Great

Tradition, and there have been at least five abrupt changes in the direction of acculturation.

One reason why many earlier anthropologists failed to give proper attention to caste as a dynamic institution is because they did not acquire knowledge of the literary historical sources regarding the people they studied, such sources generally having been left to the ruminations of scholars specializing in the humanities. Unfortunately, people are still studying villages, castes, and other social units with the tacit assumption that these are static social entities, that caste is discrete, and that such studies retain practical relevancy for decades. But the kind of change documented here for the Paratavar is also evident from the study of recent metamorphoses of other castes or groups, such as the Nadar of southern Tamilnadu, the Vellalar of Tanjavur, the Nayar and the Ilavar of Kerala, and the Thakurs and Chamars of Uttar Pradesh.

Generalities about caste spread in Europe and America have produced the impression among people with superficial knowledge of India, that the Indian social pattern retards culture change, that rigidly demarcated social units form a fixed hierarchy, and that India cannot 'progress' until this system is weakened by urbanization and anonymity. Those who desire to implement social and economic change, however, might do well to ponder how they might best take advantage of these qualities of responsiveness, adaptability, and dynamism characteristic of certain castes. The segmentation of society, so characteristic of the Indian scene, can facilitate the kind of change considered essential today, because a segment of society can respond to cross-cultural currents more readily than a homogeneous society as a whole can change.

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# SOME FISHING COMMUNITIES OF WEST BENGAL

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(Received on 13 July 1968)

**Abstract :** The author makes some observations on marine fishermen and fish-traders in a southern district of West Bengal.

## *Fishing units*

THE fisherfolk, as we find them at present in West Bengal, may broadly be divided into two categories, namely, fishermen and fish-traders.

The marine fishermen are headed by different leaders, known as *bahardars* among East Bengal refugee fisherfolk and *manjhi* among the fisherfolk of West Bengal proper. They return home once in a fortnight during low tide when the volume of catch decreases. They recruit their crewmen from different villages either on share or on salary basis for the fishing season from October to February when the sea is calm.

The fishing units are mostly caste, kin and village or neighbourhood based. This feature is more persistent in the case of share-based units than those on salary basis. This may be due to the fact that interpersonal reliance becomes necessary to run an enterprise on the basis of joint share. The fishing units who dry the fish make their temporary shelters near the fishing grounds and live there during the whole of the season. But those who sell off fresh fish do not make any such shelter on the shore. They live on the

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The data were collected from Frasergunj, Bakkhali, Jambu Island, Namkhana, Kakdwip and Diamond Harbour in the district of 24 Parganas during 1967-68 in connexion with The Marine Fisherfolk Project of the Anthropological Survey of India, supervised by Shri B. Mukherjee.

The author is highly indebted to Dr. S. C. Sinha for his kind guidance and valuable suggestions in preparing this paper.

boat itself. But these groups beginning as contractual units tend to develop a cohesive moral order in such transient societies. It may also be noted in this connexion that, due to their long association with the sea, the marine fisherfolk have developed a perfect knowledge of their environment.

### *The Fisherfolk*

The fishermen are mainly the Rajbangshi, Dhibar, Bagdi, Malo, and Kaibarta (Jaladas). Some of these castes are also involved in fish trade, particularly in the trade of fresh fish. Among the fishermen, the Malo, the Rajbangshi and the Bagdi mostly deal in fresh fish and the Kaibarta in dried fish.

The types of nets operated by these two classes are distinct. Those who deal in fresh fish operate the gill net or hook and line which allow them to keep the fish fresh. The Kaibarta who operate bag nets (*bindi* or *behundi*) cannot take out the fish caught in the net from time to time. They have to wait till the end of the tide or ebb when the whole net is pulled over to the boat to remove the catch. By that time the whole catch becomes a lump due to severe currents of the sea. Some of the Rajbangshis and Dhibars also operate small bag nets and are engaged in drying their catch on a small scale, unlike the Kaibartas who do it on a large scale.

It is worth mentioning here that the Dhibars are mostly engaged in operating smaller bag nets, the size of the meshes of which is also smaller, to dry red shrimps (*rangi-chingri*). Due to the smaller size of the meshes these nets give considerable resistance to the continuous flow of water. Therefore the opening end of the net cannot be increased to give more passage to the inflow of the fish and the current of water.

It appears that those who are involved in drying fish on a large scale are economically better off than those who sell fresh fish. This is so particularly in the case of the leader (*bahardar*) of the fishing unit, whether operating with shared or salaried men. In the case of a share-based unit, the *bahardar* gets an extra share for his net or boat, if he supplies them.

**East Pakistan refugees :** It appears that fishing in the open sea and drying the catch on a large scale has grown largely after the partition when fisherfolk from East Bengal migrated in large numbers to India. This can be traced from a study of the development of the *Jadan* system which has been described later on.

It is obvious that marine fishing can generally develop in coastal districts, provided the fishing grounds are in its proximity. Unfortunately in West Bengal such districts are not abundant. Southern Sundarban (24 Parganas) seems to be a fertile fishing ground. But that area has been reclaimed only a few decades ago and is very thinly populated. As such, marine fishing cannot flourish much in West Bengal except in the coastal parts of Midnapore, where there is a substantial population of fisherfolk in the hinterland. In contrast, the fisherfolk of Chittagong and Noakhali, due to the favourable ecological set-up, had developed the art of marine fishing very much in their natal districts. Even as refugees settled in India, they are following their accustomed calling although they have become settled in different parts of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa under adverse ecological conditions. A large number of them are also drifting into 'non-caste occupations' like rickshaw-pulling, either as a part-time or full-time occupation.

It is important to note that the fish trade, that is the marketing of fish, was controlled by one section of local Muslims, known as the Nikari, who are economically well off. It may be noted that one section of the Nikaris is gradually taking up catching fish in creeks with small bag nets. They dispose of their fresh catch. Of course, thereby they have lost their social status and now form a separate endogamous unit.

Now-a-days, some high-caste Hindus are also coming into the fish trade, particularly, in the trade of fresh fish. Some Bihari Muslims are also involved in the fresh-fish trade. But strikingly enough, not a single Marwari capitalist, who dominate the business enterprises of India, has come into this field.

**Some fresh-fish trade centres :** Let us see the actual situation in some of the fresh-fish trade centres of the district of 24 Parganas.

(i) Frasersganj.

There are 5 agents or *atdars* (Bihari Muslim—1, Bihari Sahu—1, Bengali Muslim—1, Bengali Mahishya—2).

(ii) Namkhana.

There are 6 agents (Muslim—3, Kaibarta—2, Kayastha—1) of the 3 financiers or *mahajans* of Calcutta.

(iii) Kakdwip.

There are 18 agents (Bengali Hindu—17, Bengali Muslim—1) of 18 *mahajans* of Calcutta (from Sealdah, Patipukur, and Howrah) belonging to different castes.

(iv) Diamond Harbour.

There are 9 Bengali Hindu financiers.

**Dry-fish trade :** If we look into the dry-fish trade, it is seen that the whole market is under the Muslims of Kerala who have their headquarters in Territy Bazaar, Calcutta. Only three or four such Kerala Muslims are the main financiers who advance money under the *dadān* system through some agents of Uluberia (Howrah) or Seoraphuli (Hooghly). These agents receive commission for their services, and they are mainly local Rajbangshis with a few Kayasthas and Muslims.

For transporting the dry-fish boat from the fishing ground in southern Sundarbans to Uluberia, the main centre of the dry-fish trade in West Bengal, the Paundra Kshatriyas and Mahishyas, who are numerically dominant, play the most important part. Some of the agents or *aratdars* are the owners of modern means of transport, like motor lorries. But the drivers are non-Bengali Hindus.

**The dadān system :** Almost all the team-leaders (*bāhardars*) (both for dry and fresh fish) are caught under the *dadān* system. Under this system the capitalists float money through their agents to different team-leaders 'free of interest'. But the team-leaders are to supply the catch of the whole season to the agents of their respective *mahajans* who manage to extract exorbitant profit out of it as follows :



(i) The team-leaders get Rs. 6 to 20 less than the prevailing market rate per maund or 82½ lbs.

(ii) The team-leaders have to give 42 kg. or sometimes even more for a maund of dry fish.

These capitalists also have a sort of association or some conventional obligations by which one capitalist abstains from advancing money to any team-leader till he repays the whole amount borrowed last year. It is also quite frequent that the capitalist can hardly realize the whole amount floated as *dadān* every year from the team-leaders. But it is customary for the capitalist to carry over the balance to the next year.

**Chain of middlemen :** On account of the need of regular supply of fish to profitable market centres, various types of middlemen have emerged and they have a great chain organization.

The whole fish trade is finally controlled by a few capitalists of Calcutta. They have hardly any direct contact with the actual fisherfolk or their team-leaders. These capitalists have various types of agents or sub-agents (*aratdars*, etc.) some of whom are in direct contact with the team-leaders, while others are engaged in different stages of its operation like transporting, supply of ice, etc.

In short, the system of the trade operates as an organic whole. Each one has a specific function, the breakdown of which is bound to disturb the whole chain.

The primary producers in the chain, that is, the fishermen themselves, gain only a just-above-subsistence return for their labours. In contrast to even poor cultivators, they do not own the primary tools of production, and are more firmly under the stranglehold of the financiers than farmers who are under the village money-lender.

While the production end of the chain is virtually limited to the traditional fishing castes, the rest of the chain is manned by people belonging to a wide range of castes and communities. There is, of course, a tendency towards monopolistic specialization by some particular communities or groups even in this sphere.

*Some suggestions*

The main problem of the marine fisherfolk is to secure cash to meet the huge expenditure (minimum six to seven thousand rupees for an established fishing unit) during the fishing season. As has been pointed out earlier, to meet this expense they are forced to take the major amount from financiers under the *dadān* system. The rest of the amount is secured from other villagers, friends and relatives at high rates of interest which varies from 25% to 144%. Under these circumstances, they are always in a state of insecurity in spite of their hard labour. As such, if any possible measure can be evolved to remove the *dadān* system from the field of the trade, the fisherfolk can flourish in West Bengal and earn a decent living.

In view of the field situation at Frasergunj and in its vicinity, like Jambu Island, the help of the Directorate of Fisheries, Government of West Bengal, may profitably be utilized. This department has one of its stations at Frasergunj which also procures dry fish from different team-leaders on cash payment and finally sells the collection in Calcutta. Now, the possibility of advancing loans to the team-leaders before the fishing season on condition that they are to supply their catch at the then market price may be explored by the departmental authorities. At the outset, this may at least be tried on an experimental basis in spite of some amount of risk.

# THE GREAT ANDAMANESE TODAY

V. K. KOCHAR

*(Received on 31 May 1968)*

**Abstract :** The author presents an account of the Great Andamanese as they are today.

**N**O published information is available about the present-day remnants of the Great Andamanese. In view of great curiosity and misinformed ideas about them, emerging partially from earlier anthropological accounts (Kochar 1968), I am giving here some general information about the remaining Great Andamanese as they are today (1966). This information is based upon casual interviews with and visits to some Andamanese living in and around Port Blair during my stay at that place in 1964-66. I had no occasion to conduct any regular field-work among them. The note below is compiled from the cursory information that I was able to gather through occasional contacts with them.

The present remnants of the Great Andamanese, counted in 1966, number barely 34 souls: men, women and children. They altogether represent six sub-tribes, mostly belonging to North and Middle Andaman Islands originally.

Aka Jeru	=	14
Aka Kora	=	12
Aka Buaro (Bale ?)	=	4
Aka Bo	=	2
Puchukwar	=	1
Aka Chere (Chari ?)	=	1

I counted them by name and location, including women and children associated with Burman households and half-

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castes. This may be the reason of discrepancy between my figures and the 1961 census figures (19 only). Since Andamanese eagerly claim them and attribute them appropriate sub-tribal and descent status *vis-a-vis* other Andamanese, I have included Andamanese women and children in Burman households in my enumeration. Eighteen persons lived in 1965 at Pipaldera and Naunaria hamlets near Memyo village in South Andaman, where an improvised kind of communal hut in a bad state existed. Four persons lived in the house of a Burman in Memeotara hamlet in South Andaman. Six persons lived in Port Blair town itself. There are 3 persons in Laltikri outpost in Baratang Island and 3 in Long Island. These include seven persons with known marital links with Burmans.

Sex and approximate age-group distribution of the present population is as follows :

Male				Female			Total
0-15	16-35	36 and above		0-15	16-35	36 and above	
8	2	8		7	4	5	34

The proportion of children to adults is not discouraging ; but 6 out of 15 children included here belong to an Andamanese woman living with a Burman. The proportion of effectively procreating adults, however, is very low. The population covers 7 married couples only (excluding one woman living with a Burman). Seven persons (adults) are widowed or divorced and 13 are unmarried. One adult female is half mad and wanders around in Port Blair.

All the Andamanese now speak a corrupt form of the *Aka-jeru* dialect as common language. Some older persons of other tribes, such as Loca, perhaps do remember their original dialects, but there is no opportunity for them to use it. Many adults of the younger generation of other tribes have forgotten their original dialects because the *Aka-jeru* dialect has been in common use for the last 50 years or so.

Most of the male adults (7 out of 10) are employed as forest-guards, bush-police or constables. Bush-police is a special

branch of the Andaman police deputed to patrol the fringe of the hostile Jarawa territory. One of the persons has recently moved to Jirkatang outpost in South Andaman. Some adult males, especially the elderly persons living near Tirur, still depend upon hunting, fishing, collection of shells and various other objects for sale or barter. For this purpose they often attach themselves to Burman households in Memyo or Tirur as servants or menials. Most of the Andamanese are chronic addicts to opium and some indulge in drinking. They procure these and other necessities like tea, sugar, tobacco, cloth, rice, etc., by barter or by serving as menials. Persons living near Memyo sometimes come to Port Blair when they can afford to pay bus fare and live with the Andamanese family at Port Blair. The addiction to opium, wine and tobacco has often led the Andamanese to odd corners and subject to pressures of various sorts. Indebtedness to Burman patrons is a frequent result of these addictions. A few Andamanese have also been sentenced to jail for illicit possession of opium. Maro at Port Blair divulged that the parents of young girls are thus forced to give their daughters to Burmans in marriage or concubinage. The Jero women, it is said, used to 'marry' Burmans more frequently. Kota's father was a Burman. Konmu, now married to a Burman, was the daughter of a Burman father. Loka, who is also known as 'Raja, is perhaps the oldest living male today. His present wife was previously attached to a Moslem convict.

Only one child goes to school. Two other children (of Kota from Jirkatang) were brought to school, but they have left. The children of the Burman father also attended school for a short period ; but the father was more interested in stipends and allowances rather than in the education of his children. The Andamanese children living around Port Blair do not know their tribal language well enough and converse among themselves generally in Hindustani. Maro said that even his eldest son cannot properly converse with elderly Andamanese coming from the 'forest'.

This young man (Maro's son) was married in 1963 to a young girl of Burman-Andamanese descent on the initiative of

senior Government officials. The Burman father received some money and help in return. The girl stayed with Maro's son for about two years and gave birth to a child. But the Burman father influenced her and took her and the child back with him. Maro reported that this is because the Burman wants to marry his daughter to another Burman and get more money out of her. He showed great indignation over the incident. The young husband was so dejected (there being few young girls available for marriage) that he absconded from his job and went all alone to Rutland Island and wandered around from one Andamanese camp to another for some time.

Whatever little social and religious life of the Andamanese exists today bears no resemblance to the traditions described in literature. The sub-tribal identities are still recognized but are not valid for any purpose. No marriage restriction except for siblings seems to hold good. They frequently use Hindustani kinship terms like *chacha*, *phupha*, *mama*, *bhai* (for both brother and sister). Marital unions are unstable. There are no ceremonial or ritual observances in marriage or divorce. The elaborate initiation rites and mortuary rites are no longer performed. My enquiries seem to indicate that they have forgotten even some of the major customs and rites. Some taboos and prohibitions, adulterated with beliefs picked up from Burmans and other local settlers, are recognized but not strictly adhered to. One informant lamented that his daughter-in-law did not obey his instructions to abstain from certain acts and food-items considered taboo for an expectant mother. There is only one communal hut in a tattered state, but this too bears little similarity to the traditional hut. The roof is like that used by forest labourers instead of the knitted type. Beds are like *charpoys*. In other places they generally live in the Burman type of high-platform huts with split-bamboo walls and floor. The wooden buckets, bow and arrow, fine mats and baskets are not made now. Improvised 'foreign' materials are used. Those still following hunting, generally use traps given by Burmans or use the Jarawa-type of bows. Few male adults are said to know how to make an S-shaped bow. This is,

however, not possessed or used by any one now. Only Loka's wife is said to know how to make fine mats and baskets. For subsistence, they depend upon rice, *atta* (wheat-flour) and *dal*, occasionally accompanied with crabs, shells, fish, meat, etc. The Andamanese living near Tirur occasionally also depend upon tubers, roots, stems, wild fruits, etc., especially when they are temporarily out in the forest on a hunting expedition. They collect some honey which they generally sell or barter away. They fish with hook and line. Only some elderly persons go for turtle hunting with spear or harpoon. Some informants said that turtle meat does not suit their stomach. They generally cook meat and fish with molten butter (*ghee*), oil, spices, chillies and salt, and prepare curry. Biye said that their children cannot digest roasted hard pork or turtle meat. The women generally do not go to forest for gathering, except when they have nothing to eat.

They do not use clay paint for decorating or protecting their bodies. They all wear clothes and footwear. In dress and decoration, the Andamanese women follow the local Burman style. There is no dancing or singing except for exhibition before V I Ps. A few songs that I heard pertain to current or modern life situations.

I was able to get information about recent important events like a birth in Maro's house, Biye's death in Rutland Island, marriage of Maro's son, attainment of puberty by Konmo's daughter, running away of Maro's son's wife. The sketchy descriptions I collected suggest that none of these events was preceded, accompanied or followed by any ritual or formal social gathering except the marriage of Maro's son. The reason for this was the interest taken by top local officials in contracting this marriage. They paid gifts and granted some money to the girl's father (Burman). The gathering was entertained by some songs and dances. Loka, Ille, Kaba, Lepai and a few other Andamanese came for the occasion and those employed by the Administration were officially brought. The Memyo-Tirur group did not come because, I was told, they did not have money to come. Some traditional

customs were imitated for the pleasure of the sophisticated gathering.

The only ritual-ceremonial occasion the Andamanese that I met have experienced in recent years is the collective observation of what they called *Baradin*. They organized such *Baradin* about 7-8 years ago with some grant-in-aid from the local administration. Most of the families migrated to Interview Island and stayed there for a few months engaging themselves in the traditional mode of life. They held some ancestor-worship rites and collective mourning for recently deceased relatives. They painted their bodies and faces, and held dancing-singing sessions occasionally. During this period small parties visited nearby islands and shores and visited some old deserted spots. The informants recalled the occasion with an air of fantasy and cherished remembrance. They lamented that necessary facilities are now not available for such *Baradin*, although they said large sums are lying in reserve for them with the Government.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The author is grateful to the Director, Anthropological Survey of India, for providing necessary facilities for writing this note and for permission to publish it.

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# CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY

CH. P. K. MOHAPATRA

J. SWAIN

(Received on 12 June 1969)

**Abstract :** Most of us believe that conversion to Christianity brings an all-round progress to the tribals which includes, among other things, economic and educational development. With this hypothesis in view a study was undertaken in the Pottasingi area of Koraput district inhabited by the Lanjia Saora, a primitive Mundari-speaking tribe. As conversion to Christianity among the tribals of this area is not extensive, a sufficient number of converted tribals were not available for study. 40 adults from converted families were interviewed and, for control observation, 40 adults among the non-converted were also selected and interviewed. It was found after a statistical analysis that conversion to Christianity has no role in the development of the tribe except in the sphere of formal education.

## *History of Conversion*

**I**N Orissa, conversion to Christianity of the tribals can be traced back to a century (1840), when the Christian mission had already set foot in the low land of Khondmal region to check the widespread practice of human sacrifice among the Khonds. Later on, efforts were gradually directed to various other tribes of Orissa. Conversion to Christianity among the Lanjia Saoras of Pottasingi area is, however, a decade old, when the missionaries of Serango Garh in Ganjam established a church in village Karanjasing. The churches in the villages of Angura, Sagada and Patil in this area have gradually developed as a result of the ceaseless efforts made by the Serango missionaries.

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### *Methods Adopted for the Study*

The villages around Pottasingi area are inhabited by the Lanjia Saora. Altogether nine villages were selected, and forty adult Saoras from thirty families found in Rejingtal, Alengar, Taikura, Jungjung, Basing-Garjang, Laiba and Barei (Pottasingi G. P.), Talna (Talna G. P.) and Angura (Sagura G. P.) were interviewed for the study. As non-converted tribals were numerous, the subjects were selected on the basis of sampling from all such villages.

Conversion to Christianity is believed to bring about all-round progress to the tribals. This has been taken to mean economic prosperity, educational development, wider knowledge and participation in local as well as national politics. To this has to be added a developed material culture, with possession of improved tools and implements, as well as the adoption of sanitary habits. The above criteria have been taken as the minimum to indicate all-round progress, although it may mean much more in a broader sense. These criteria have been grouped under four major indicators of progress, namely, educational, political, economic and material culture.

The four indicators of all-round progress were awarded certain marks for drawing up a statistical inference. An account may be given here of the value attached to the various indicators.

**(A) Educational achievement :** Criteria : (i) literacy capacity of signing one's name ; (ii) capability of communicating in more than one's own dialect.

**(B) Political consciousness :** Criteria : (i) knowledge about national and state-level political leaders ; (ii) participation and knowledge in local panchayat elections ; (iii) knowledge about persons bearing office, either traditional or statutory.

**(C) Economic progress :** Criteria : (i) approximate annual income from various sources ; (ii) possession of type of house (pucca, tiled or thatch) ; (iii) possession of amount of land and number of livestock.

**(D) Material culture :** Criteria : (i) ownership of agricultural implements ; (ii) dress and ornaments ; (iii) household utensils ; (iv) hygienic habits.

The individuals thus selected were interviewed and given individual scores on each major indicator, and a range was fixed so as to indicate the persons scoring below or above the standard. Those who secured marks in the standard range or above were classified as 'Developed' and the rest as 'Under-developed'. Finally, individuals were grouped according to their religion and a comparison was made according to chi-square test. Comparative picture with regard to each indicator was drawn between the individual and total of each group so as to find out the partial or total impact of Christianity on the tribals. The findings may not, however, be taken as general truth, as only forty Saoras from each religious group were interviewed. A statistical analysis of the data leads to the findings detailed below.

### *Findings*

**A. Educational achievement :** Let us suppose that there is no effect of conversion to Christianity on educational achievement of the Lanjia Saoras of Pottasingi area, that is, they are independent of each other. On the basis of this supposition, we will calculate the expected frequency and compare it with the observed frequency.

*Table of observed frequency*

	Developed	Under-developed	Total
Non-converted	3	37	40
Converted	15	25	40
Total	18	62	80

Calculated chi-square value =  $X^2 = 10.32$

But table value of  $X^2_{.05}$  with 1 d.f. is found from the table to be 3.841 at  $X^2_{.05}$ .

By comparing the two values of  $X^2$ , we found that our calculated value of  $X^2$  is greater than  $X^2_{.05}$  with 1 d.f. that is  $10.32 > 3.841$ . So our assumption that conversion to

Christianity and educational achievements are independent is wrong. Hence Null-hypothesis is rejected, showing that conversion to Christianity has an effect on educational achievement.

**Political consciousness :** Assuming that there is no effect of Christianity on political consciousness, i.e. both are independent, we may calculate the expected frequency and compare it with the observed frequency collected.

*Table of observed frequency*

	Developed	Under-developed	Total
Non-converted	11	29	40
Converted	5	35	40
Total	16	64	80

Calculated chi-square =  $X^2 = 2.81$ .

Now the table value of  $X^2_{.05}$  with 1 d. f. is found from the table to be 3.841 at  $X^2_{.05}$  which is significant. Hence the Null-hypothesis of independence may be accepted, i.e. conversion to Christianity may not have any effect on political consciousness among them.

$$3.841 > 2.81 \quad (P < .05)$$

Therefore our assumption that Christianity and political consciousness are independent may be correct and we conclude that conversion to Christianity may not have any affect on political consciousness of the Lanjia Saoras of Pottasingi area.

**Economic condition :** Let us suppose that there is no relation between conversion to Christianity and economic condition. On the basis of this hypothesis we will calculate the expected frequency and compare it with the observed frequency from the collected data.

*Table showing observed frequency*

	Developed	Under-developed	Total
Non-converted	23	17	40
Converted	15	25	40
Total	38	42	80

Now  $X^2$  with 1 d.f. at 5% level is calculated to be 3.2. Hence  $3.841 > 3.2$  ( $P < .05$ )

Table value of  $X^2_{.05}$  with 1 d.f. is 3.841. So our calculated  $X^2$  value is less, which means, it is insignificant ; showing that the hypothesis may be accepted, i.e. conversion to Christianity may not have any effect on economic conditions of the Lanjia Saoras.

**Material culture :** Suppose conversion to Christianity has no effect on material culture of the Lanjia Saoras of Pottasingi area ; that means they are independent of each other. On this hypothesis, we will calculate the expected frequency and compare it with the observed frequency collected.

*Table of observed frequency*

	Developed	Under-developed	Total
Non-converted	22	18	40
Converted	32	8	40
Total	54	26	80

Chi-square =  $X^2 = 5.68$

Table value of  $X^2_{.05}$  with 1 d.f. = 3.841

So  $5.68 > 3.84$  ( $P < .05$ )

Now by comparison of the two values of  $X^2$ , we found that our calculated value of  $X^2$  is greater than  $X^2_{.05}$  with 1 d.f. Hence the fact that conversion to Christianity and material culture are independent of each other is wrong and we conclude that conversion to Christianity may have some effect on material culture.

**All-round progress :** Let us assume that there is no relation between conversion to Christianity and all-round progress. Relying on this hypothesis, we will calculate the expected frequency and will compare it with observed frequency.

Table showing observed frequency

	Developed	Under-developed	Total
Non-converted	18	27	40
Converted	17	23	40
Total	30	50	80

Calculated chi-square value =  $X^2 = 0.853$  ( $P < .05$ )

But table value of  $X^2_{.05}$  with 1 d.f. = 3.841.

Hence  $3.841 > 0.853$

So the table value of  $X^2_{.05}$  with 1 d.f. is highly significant in comparison with the calculated chi-square value. Thus Null-hypethesis of independence may be accepted, showing that conversion to Christianity may not have any effect on all-round progress among the Lanjia Saoras of Pottasingi area.

### General conclusion

From the above results we see that conversion to Christianity may have effect on educational achievement and material culture individually, but, on the other hand, it may not have any effect on political consciousness and economic condition. In general, also, we may conclude on the basis of the last table that conversion to Christianity may not have any effect on all-round progress or development although it appears to do so.

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# SOCIO-CULTURAL CORRELATES OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

P. C. DEB

*(Received on 1 December 1968)*

**Abstract :** The present paper, which is based on the study of a village near Ludhiana (Punjab), describes the participation pattern of rural people in community affairs. The main objectives of the study were to prepare a community participation scale and to bring out the socio-cultural factors associated with community participation. The findings of the study indicate that only a small proportion of the village people take active interest in the affairs of the community. Some of the socio-cultural factors which are highly associated with participation are caste, value orientation, income and occupational role.

## *Introduction*

THE concept of social or community participation seems to have come into use in response to a desire to measure the volume of the individual's social interaction. A practical interest in determining the characteristics of people who participate extensively in community affairs has been the motivating force for most of the studies of social participation. Some of the past studies indicate that the extent of participation is closely associated with certain personal and socio-psychological factors, like age, status, occupation, education, social values, etc. (Hay 1948; Kaufman 1949; Mayo 1950, and Anderson 1946 & 1954). The area, however, has remained practically unexplored in India. The present study, therefore, is an attempt to portray the background of the people with different levels of participation in community life. It will add to our knowledge of village interaction pattern and will also

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have practical utility for change agents, because the programmes of socio-economic development in the country presupposes the largest measure of co-operation from the people.

The broad objectives of the present study were: (1) to prepare an appropriate community participation scale, and (2) to highlight the factors associated with participation.

### *Methodology*

Field-work for the study was carried on during March-June, 1968, in a village about five kilometers from Ludhiana, connected by a pucca road. The village was purposively selected, keeping in view the following factors: (1) it was a medium-sized and multi-caste village, and (2) it had people with diversified occupations.

All the heads of families in the village, numbering 114, constituted the respondents of the study. They were personally interviewed on a pre-tested schedule to collect the relevant data.

On the basis of a set of questions, the extent of community participation of each respondent was measured and then their socio-cultural characteristics were compared. These characteristics included: (a) age, (b) education, (c) value orientation, (d) income, (e) caste, and (f) occupational role.

### *Findings and Discussion*

**A. The community participation scale and participation categories:** For the purpose of this study, it was considered necessary to develop an appropriate measure of social participation. Previous attempts to measure participation have mostly been in terms of membership in association or single-channel participation, like voting. Since in the Indian countryside the membership of formal organizations is limited to village panchayat and co-operative societies, the latter again being restricted to agriculturists, this study found it necessary to prepare an index of participation that would reflect informal involvement of the people in community affairs. The scale used in the study, therefore, was based upon six questions that were regarded as constituting informal community participation.



These questions pertained to such behaviour as : (1) consulting and discussing with or taking advice from others in (a) intra-family, (b) inter-family, and (c) inter-caste problems ; and (2) visiting, friendship, and exchange of work.

The method of scoring was to give each individual one point for each citation received by him from others in the community. The resulting individual score ranged from zero to 22. On the basis of frequency of scores, the respondents were classified into three social participation categories : high (score 14 and above), medium (score 7-13), and low (score 0-6) (Table 1).

TABLE 1

*Distribution of respondents on the basis of community participation index*

Index	Number	Per cent
High (14 and above)	19	16.6
Medium (7-13)	33	28.8
Low (0-6)	62	54.6
Total	114	100.00

As is apparent from the above table, the majority of respondents were those who took little part in community affairs, followed by the medium and high participation groups. It thus indicated that high community participation in the village was limited to a small proportion of the people.

**B. Relationship of socio-cultural characteristics with community participation categories :** To test the validity of the relationship of each of the six variables, namely, age, education, value orientation, income, occupational role, and caste, with the community participation index, the coefficients of correlation were worked out in the first four cases and chi-square in the fifth and sixth cases. The data are summarized in Table 2.

**Age :** As is apparent from Table 2, the majority of the respondents in the high participation category were old, while

only a small percentage of the persons in the medium and low participation categories were above 50 years (18.2 and 24.2 respectively). Again, about two-thirds of the people in the medium and low participation categories and one-third in the high category were of middle age (31-50). It is thus obvious that the extent of social participation increases with advance in age.

The coefficient of correlation between age and community participation, however, was found positive but not statistically significant.

**Education :** The majority of respondents in the high participation category were literate, while literacy percentages amongst the other two categories were 39.4 (medium) and 37 (low). Again, as compared to about two-thirds of the respondents in the low category who were illiterate, only 47 per cent of the high participation respondents were without any education. Although, the coefficient of correlation between education and participation was not found significant, still a tendency towards association between education and community participation can be noticed from the above analysis.

TABLE 2

*Distribution of respondents according to socio-cultural characteristics and participation index*

Community participation index								
Socio-cultural characteristics	14 and above		7-13		0-6		Total	
	( High )		( Medium )		( Low )			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1. Age :	r							
Young (up to 30 yrs.)	3	15.7	5	15.2	7	11.3	15	+0.042 N.S.
Middle (31-50 yrs.)	6	31.6	22	66.6	40	64.5	68	
Old (51 yrs. & above)	10	52.6	6	18.2	15	24.2	31	
	19		33		62		114	

Socio-cultural characteristics	14 and above ( High )		7-13 ( Medium )		0-6 ( Low )		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
2. Education :								
Illiterate	9	47.4	20	60.6	39	62.9	68	+0.063 N.S.*
Literate	10	52.6	13	39.4	23	37.1	46	
	19		33		62		114	
3. Value orientation score :								
Traditional (up to 35)	3	15.7	12	36.4	27	43.5	42	r +0.369**
Transitional (36-45)	5	26.3	10	30.3	22	35.5	37	
Modern (46 & above)	11	58.0	11	33.3	13	21.0	35	
	19		33		62		114	
4. Income :								
(thousand rupees)								r
Low (up to 5)	4	21.0	21	63.6	49	79.0	74	+0.414**
Medium (6-10)	5	26.3	8	24.2	7	11.3	20	
High (11 & above)	10	52.6	4	12.1	6	9.7	20	
	19		33		62		114	
5. Occupational role :								
Farm	13	68.4	11	33.3	18	29.0	42	$\chi^2$ 10.00**
Profession and								
Semi-skilled	2	10.5	13	39.4	28	45.2	43	
Unskilled	4	21.0	9	27.3	16	25.8	29	
	19		33		62		114	
6. Caste :								
Jat	13	68.4	11	33.3	18	29.0	42	$\chi^2$ 10.00**
Non-Jat	1	5.2	6	18.2	13	21.0	20	
Harijan	5	26.3	16	48.5	31	50.0	52	
	19		33		62		114	

\* Significant at 5 per cent level.

\*\* Significant at 1 per cent level.

**Value orientation :** Each individual was administered twenty statements on traditional-modern way of life, with set-answers on a three-point scale. The total points an individual received became his value orientation score. The actual individual scores varied from 28 to 55. On the basis of individual scores, the respondents were categorized into three groups : traditional, transitional and modern.

Modern outlook was the dominant feature of the high participant group, while the highest percentage (43.5) of the low participation respondents held the traditional value of life.

The coefficient of correlation between value orientation and participation categories was found positive and significant at 1 per cent level, indicating that community participation has positive relationship with value orientation of the people.

**Income :** The majority of the high participation group had the highest income in the community. As against about two-thirds of the respondents in the low participation category, with lowest income, only 21 per cent in the high category had such income.

The coefficient of correlation between income and community participation, which was found positive and significant at 1 per cent level, indicates that income is highly associated with community participation. Persons with higher income, therefore, would have a better chance of taking active part in community affairs than those with lower income.

**Occupational role :** It is obvious from the table that farming is the dominant occupation of the respondents in the participation category. Only a small percentage of the people in the three participation categories were engaged in unskilled work.

The chi-square value between occupation and participation categories, which was found significant at 1 per cent level, indicates that occupational role is highly associated with participation in social groups. In an agriculture-based society, farmers, who are generally the dominant group in the village, take active interest in community affairs.

**Caste :** Respondents were divided into three caste

categories : (1) Jat, (2) Non-Jat (other castes excluding Jat and Harijans), and (3) Harijan.

The largest proportion (over two-thirds) of the respondents in the high participation group belonged to the Jat (cultivator) caste. However, Harijan (scheduled castes) respondent were found largest in both the medium and low participation categories. The chi-square value between caste and participation categories was found highly significant. It is thus indicative of the fact that cultivating caste (Jat) and numerically superior castes (Harijan) take more interest in group activities in the village as compared to other caste groups.

### *Summary and Conclusion*

The present study of social participation was undertaken in a village in the Punjab with a view to developing an appropriate measure of community participation, to classify the villagers into participation categories, and to highlight the socio-cultural factors associated with the extent of participation.

On the basis of six questions pertaining to interaction in the community, a scale of community participation was constructed and the respondents (all heads of households) were grouped into three participation categories : high, medium and low. The findings indicate that active participation in group life is limited to a small proportion of the population.

To find out the relationship of socio-cultural characteristics with community participation index, the statistical measures used were co-efficient of correlation and chi-square test. The findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between participation index and four variables, namely, income, occupational role, value orientation, and caste group. In case of age and education, although the coefficients of correlation were not found significant, yet the analysis indicates that these two factors have some association with the extent of community participation.

At the moment, when great strides are being made to bring about socio-economic change in the country, with the willing

participation of the people in the various development programmes, the findings of the study would be useful to those who are engaged in this gigantic task.

The study has explored a new area of sociological research. Further studies are needed to draw useful generalizations.

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# ATTITUDE TOWARDS AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG TRIBAL AND NON-TRIBAL PEOPLE

N. K. JAISWAL, A. S. KHAN & JAI SHANKER

*(Received on 1 June 1969)*

**Abstract :** A study was made in Bihar to analyse the attitude of tribal and non-tribal leaders and followers towards agricultural development. It was generally found that the leaders as well as followers in both the communities did not possess any positive attitude towards official programmes and personnel. The attitude of followers however was found to be more negative than that of the leaders.

## *Introduction*

**I**N many areas of Bihar, tribal and non-tribal villages are located side by side, both being served by the same extension agency. But as the socio-cultural conditions of tribal and non-tribal villages differ greatly, it is presumed that the responses of tribals and non-tribal leaders and their followers towards extension programmes will also vary considerably. The analysis of the reactions of leaders towards agricultural programmes in comparison with their followers would be of great help in predicting how far these leaders will be helpful in motivating their followers in accepting the recommendations of agricultural agencies. A comparison of the responses of tribal and non-tribal leaders will help extension workers to plan specific approaches for effective utilization of the leaders of these two communities.

**Selection of area :** The present research was carried out in Community Development Block, Raneshwar, in the district of Santal Parganas, Bihar, for the following reasons :

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1. Both tribal and non-tribal villages are situated in the same locality and this was likely to facilitate comparative analysis of tribal and non-tribal leaders.
3. The researchers were well acquainted with the socio-economic condition of the tribal and non-tribal villages.
3. As one of the researchers belonged to that locality, he could speak the local dialect, which facilitated rapport-building with the respondents.

**Selection of villages :** Separate lists of tribal and non-tribal villages were prepared and, in consultation with the Block staff, two from each having similar agro-physical conditions and cropping pattern were selected. These four selected villages were :

- (a) Tribal : Jaherpara and Pathorahal
- (b) Non-tribal : Hakikatpur and Rangameti

**Identification of leadership situation :** In a pilot study in the area of investigation mainly four types of leaders, namely, Traditional, Political, Agricultural and Leaders in Social Affairs were observed ; and it was decided to carry out this investigation with respect to all these four types of leaders. For the present investigation, it was decided to use the sociometric technique which is most widely used for identification of leaders. For developing the sociometric test, all the four types of leadership situations were explained to the respondents and they were asked to indicate their first three choices for each leadership situation.

**Interviewing :** In order to secure sincere and honest views of the respondents, the following precautions were taken during interviews : (1) a good rapport was built up with the villagers and the influentials ; (2) care was taken to interview the respondents when they were alone ; (3) questions regarding preferences were asked gradually. After finding out the first choice of the respondent, he was asked to mention his second choice, supposing that the leader of his first choice was absent. The third choice of a respondent for a leader was similarly found out. (4) Every precaution was taken to keep the responses as confidential as possible.



**Selection of leaders:** After the completion of field-work, identification marks were given to all the respondents as they came in sequence for interviewing. The next step was to prepare a  $N \times N$  matrix with chooser along the matrix and chosen across the matrix. In the  $N \times N$  matrix, the preference (1st, 2nd and 3rd) which an individual received were counted separately for each situation. The scores assigned to three preferences of the respondents are indicated in the parentheses. First preference (3), Second preference (2) and Third preference (1). Sociometric scores were calculated by adding the scores obtained by the individual for each leadership situation separately.

The situation-wise sociometric scores of the respondents of each village were arranged in descending order, and the first three individuals were taken as leaders. It was found that leadership was overlapping in most of the situations, i.e. a person who was leader in one situation was also a leader in other situations. The following table gives the details of leaders selected from each village for the four situations.

**TABLE 1**  
*Village-wise distribution of leaders*

Number and situation	Tribal village		Non-tribal village	
	Jaherpara N=3	Pathorahal N=5	Hakikatpur N=5	Rangamatia N=6
1	—	2	2	3
2	—	1	1	1
3	—	—	—	1
4	3	2	2	1

**Selection of followers:** After identification of the leaders, the remaining heads of households were grouped as followers

and fifty per cent of them were selected by stratified random sampling. The followers were first stratified into the following six classes based on the size of holding : (1) no land, (2) up to 1 acre, (3) 1 to 5 acres, (4) 5 to 10 acres, (5) 10 to 15 acres and (6) 15 to 20 acres. From each stratum, 50 per cent of the followers were selected by random sampling. In total there were 29 followers from tribal villages and 33 followers from non-tribal villages.

**Construction of attitude scales :** For measuring the attitudes of the respondents towards agricultural development programmes and agricultural extension personnel of the Block under study, two attitude scales were developed by the method suggested by Likert (1932). The following procedure was adopted for construction of the attitude scale.

### *Collection of Attitude Statements*

A pilot study was conducted in Raneshwar Block to collect such statements as would reflect the attitude of the tribal and non-tribal people towards agricultural development programmes and the extension personnel of the Block.

**Scrutiny of the items :** The items which were collected in the pilot study were given to 30 postgraduate students and teachers of the Bihar Agricultural College, Sabour, for scrutiny by checking those which were :

- (i) vague and ambiguous,
- (ii) duplicate statements,
- (iii) containing more than one idea.

The judges were also asked to classify the statements into three categories :

- (i) statements which clearly reflected positive attitude towards Block or Block personnel,
- (ii) statements which clearly reflected negative attitude,
- (iii) statements which were neutral, i.e. neither positive nor negative.

The responses obtained from the judges were analysed and the items which were marked as clearly positive or clearly negative by more than 80 per cent of the judges were selected.

The total number of statements was eighteen for agricultural development programmes and twenty for Block personnel.

### *Validity of the Statements*

To test the validity of each statement, pre-testing was done among sixty tribal and non-tribal farmers of Raneshwar Block. The respondents were asked to indicate the degree of agreement with each statement. For this, they were asked to rate the statements on five points, namely, strongly agree, agree, indifferent, disagree and strongly disagree. It was found that the common way of expression of both tribal and non-tribal people regarding their degree of agreement with each issue was in terms of anna in a rupee. For example, the respondent who strongly agreed with the statement used to say that they agreed up to 16 annas with the issue. When this expression was taken into account, it was found that it was not difficult to get the rating of the respondents on five points. The five points of the rating scale were given scores as indicated in the parentheses : strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided or neutral (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1), for the positive item. For negative statements, the scores were reversed : strongly agree (1), agree (2), undecided or neutral (3), disagree (4), strongly disagree (5).

Thus the scores on each statement ranged from 1 to 5, and the total scores for 18 attitude items each for Block personnel and working of Community Development Block ranged from 18 to 90.

To test the validity of each item the coefficient of correlation between the scores of individual items and total score was worked out for the data obtained from the sixty respondents. The coefficients of correlation were tested against 58 degree of freedom. The statements which had significant and positive correlation with the total scores were taken as valid statements. Ten such statements each for working of Community Development Block and Block personnel were selected for the final form of attitude scale.

## Findings

**Attitude towards agricultural extension programme :** The basic requirement for favourable attitude of a rural community towards the agricultural development programme is that they must have faith in the programme and must possess a favourable attitude towards it. The data regarding frequency distribution of respondents and mean attitude score of respondents are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

TABLE 2

*Distribution of respondents by scores on attitude towards agricultural extension programme*

Attitude score		Non-tribal leader (NL)	Tribal leader (TL)	Non-tribal follower (NF)	Tribal follower (TF)
		N=11	N=8	N=33	N=29
Below	1.5	—	—	1 ( 3.03)	—
1.6	— 2.5	1( 9.09)	5(62. 5)	14(42.42)	17(58.62)
2.6	— 3.5	7(63.36)	3(37.50)	18(54.54)	12(41.38)
3.6	— 4.5	3(27.27)	—	—	—
Above	4.5	—	—	—	—

TABLE 3

*Mean attitude of different groups of respondents towards agricultural extension programme and calculated value of C.D.*

Respondent- categories	Non-tribal leader (NL)	Tribal leader (TL)	Non-tribal follower (NF)	Tribal follower (TF)
Mean score	3.20	2.59	2.65	2.38

F ratio 7.95 \*\* (Significant at 1% level)

Value of C.D. at 5% level for

NL vs. TL	= 0.44	NF vs. TF	= 9.24
NL vs. NF	= 0.34	NL vs. TF	= 0.34
TL vs. TF	= 0.38	TL vs. NF	= 0.38

Results

NL

NF

TL

TF

It appears from Table 2, that none of the respondents had attitude scores above 4.5. This indicated that none of the tribal or non-tribal leaders and their followers had strongly favourable attitude towards the agricultural extension programme. However, considerable variation was observed in the frequency distribution and mean score on attitude of four groups of respondents.

**Tribal versus non-tribal leaders :** It will be noticed from Table 2 that only one (9%) non-tribal leader had a negative attitude towards the agricultural extension programme. The majority (63%) of them held neutral attitude and 27 per cent held a slightly positive attitude. As against this, none of the tribal leaders held a positive attitude towards the agricultural extension programme. The majority of tribal leaders (62.5%) held negative attitude and only 37 per cent of them possessed neutral attitude. It is clear from Table 3 that the mean attitude score of non-tribal leaders (3.2) was significantly higher than that of tribal leaders (2.59). This indicates that non-tribal leaders in general had less negative attitude towards agricultural extension programme than the tribal leaders.

The less negative attitude of non-tribal leaders might have been due to the fact that in comparison with tribal leaders they had more contacts with the extension personnel. The informal interview in the area also revealed that the tribal leaders received relatively much less help from the extension agency than non-tribal leaders. It was natural therefore that the tribal leaders held a more negative attitude than non-tribal leaders.

**Leaders versus their followers :** The comparison of attitude score of leaders and followers in the case of non-tribal community revealed that a greater percentage of followers held negative attitude towards agricultural extension programme than their leaders. Though, three non-tribal leaders had a positive attitude, none of their followers held a favourable opinion towards agricultural extension programme. It will be noticed from Table 3 that the mean attitude score of non-tribal

followers (2.65) was significantly lower than that of their leaders (3.20). Thus it can be concluded that the attitude of non-tribal followers was more negative towards agricultural extension programme in comparison with their leaders. It was quite a common observation in the area of investigation that whatever little efforts were made by the extension workers under the agricultural extension programme, these were mostly confined to the local leaders. It was natural, therefore, that the followers who received less help from the extension agency held more negative attitude towards the agricultural extension programme.

The frequency distribution of tribal leaders and their followers revealed that the majority of both tribal leaders and their followers had a negative attitude towards agricultural extension programme. It was also found that the mean attitude score of tribal leaders (3.59) and their followers (2.38) did not differ significantly. This indicated that both tribal leaders and their followers held an equally negative attitude towards agricultural extension programme. This might have been mainly due to the fact that practically no significant and tangible work was done for the development of agriculture in tribal villages. Therefore, both tribal leaders and their followers were found to be equally dissatisfied with the agricultural extension programme.

**Attitude towards agricultural extension personnel :** It is well known that for implementing the extension programme, the extension personnel must win the confidence of people. Before they can make the people accept and act upon their recommendation, they themselves have to be accepted by the people. Thus the attitude of people towards agricultural extension personnel is of significant importance for their favourable response towards the agricultural extension programme itself. The frequency distribution and mean scores on attitude of respondents towards agricultural extension personnel are presented in Tables 4 and 5.

TABLE 4

*Distribution of respondents by scores on attitude towards agricultural extension personnel*

Scores	Non-tribal leader (NL)	Tribal leader (TL)	Non-tribal follower (NF)	Tribal follower (TF)
	N=11	N=8	N=83	N=29
0.6 - 1.5	—	—	1(3.03)	—
1.6 - 2.5	5(45.45)	6(75.00)	19(57.57)	23(79.31)
2.6 - 3.5	6(54.54)	2(25.00)	12(36.36)	6(20.69)
3.6 - 4.5	—	—	—	—
Above 4.5	—	—	—	—

TABLE 5

*Mean scores on attitude of different groups of respondents towards Block personnel and calculated value of C.D.*

Respondent- categories	Non-tribal leader (NL)	Tribal leader (TL)	Non-tribal follower (NF)	Tribal follower (TF)
Mean attitude scores	2.71	2.12	2.37	2.06

F ratio 2.82\* (Significant at 5% level)

Value of C.D. at 5% for :

NL vs. TL = 0.38	NF vs. TF = 0.21
NL vs. NF = 0.29	NL vs. TF = 0.29
TL vs. TF = 0.32	TL vs. NF = 0.22

Results	NL	NF	TL	TF
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It will be noticed from the table that none of the tribal leaders or their followers had an attitude score above 3.5. This indicated that none of the tribals or non-tribals possessed even

slightly favourable attitude towards agricultural extension personnel. However, Tables 4 and 5 indicated that considerable variation existed in the attitude of a few groups of respondents with respect to agricultural extension personnel. This can be discussed as under.

**Tribal versus non-tribal leaders :** It appears from Table 5 that a relatively larger percentage of tribal leaders (75 per cent) held a negative attitude towards Block personnel as compared to non-tribal leaders. Table 5 also discloses that the mean score of non-tribal leaders was 2.7. This clearly indicates that their attitude towards Block personnel was less unfavourable than that of tribal leaders. But as the mean scores in both the groups were below 3.0, it can be said that both tribal and non-tribal leaders did not possess favourable attitude towards Block personnel. This clearly indicated that the Block extension personnel had not been able to gain the confidence of the local leaders.

**Leaders versus followers :** The study of attitude score of leaders and followers in the non-tribal community reveals that in comparison with the leaders a larger percentage of their followers (60%) held negative attitude towards Block personnel. The mean attitude score of non-tribal followers (2.37) was significantly less than that of their leaders (2.71). This also indicates that the attitude of the general mass of non-tribal was more negative towards Block personnel as compared to their leaders. This might have been due to the fact that the non-tribal leaders received relatively greater help from extension personnel than their followers.

The frequency distribution of tribals by attitude scores presented in Table 4 reveals that the majority of both tribal leaders (75%) and their followers (79%) held a negative attitude towards Block personnel. It is noticed in Table 5 that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of these two groups of tribal respondents. This clearly indicated that both tribal leaders and followers held an equally negative attitude towards Block personnel.



It is interesting that the non-tribal followers had significantly higher mean scores than tribal followers as well as tribal leaders. Thus one can say that the tribals had more negative attitude towards Block personnel than the non-tribals.

The reasons for significant variation in the attitude of tribals and non-tribals was quite apparent. The informal observation in the area revealed that extension personnel who were themselves non-tribals did not have much contact with tribal people. It was also found that they paid comparatively less attention to the agricultural extension programme of the tribal villages. It was the main reason for the common saying in the tribal villages that extension personnel were meant for the benefit of the *dikus* (non-tribals) only.

### *Conclusion*

The preceding discussion points out that though there was significant variation between the mean scores of tribal and non-tribal leaders and their followers, all the four groups of respondents in general did not possess favourable attitude towards the agricultural extension programme and agricultural extension personnel, and the difference between them was a matter of degree and not of kind.

The detailed analysis of the response of respondents on specific items of the attitude scale related to the agricultural extension programme revealed that all tribal and non-tribal respondents strongly felt that most of the agricultural extension programme in the Block was confined to paper and very little work was done in the field. The majority of the respondents also felt that their primary need was to secure adequate irrigation for increasing agricultural production. But according to them, no significant work was done by the Block in the field of irrigation. Thus the majority of tribal and non-tribal farmers were dissatisfied with the agricultural extension programme of the Block. The informal interviews in the area also revealed that the Block under investigation was started in 1952, and during the first few years quite

impressive work was done ; but now after sixteen years of existence, the Block was carrying on merely a routine type of work.

As discussed in the preceding section, the majority of both tribal and non-tribal respondents also held a negative attitude towards Block personnel and the analysis of the response on specific items of attitude scale related to Block personnel revealed that both the tribal and non-tribal felt that the agricultural extension worker did not make a sincere effort to help the farmers, and their approach was confined to a few influential persons in the village. They also said that the agricultural extension worker made false promises and were more concerned about obeying the orders of their officials than in looking after the problems and needs of farmers. A considerable percentage of respondents believe that agricultural personnel possess bookish knowledge of agriculture, which has no practical utility for them.

Thus it can be concluded that agricultural extension personnel have failed to gain the confidence of both tribal and non-tribal leaders and their followers in the area under investigation.

### *The Implication*

The present investigation brings to light that the Community Development Programme, even after sixteen years of operation has not been able to create a favourable response among both tribal and non-tribal communities with respect to the agricultural development programme and its personnel.

In such a situation the help of local leaders could have been of some value. As both the tribal and non-tribal leaders did not hold positive attitudes towards either agricultural development programme or personnel, it can be concluded that in the existing state of affairs the leaders of both communities will not be of much help in motivating their followers to co-operate in the agricultural development

programme. It may be pointed out here that in the non-tribal community, the leaders had significantly less negative attitude than followers. But in the tribal community the difference between the attitude of leaders and of followers was found to be non-significant, and the tribals in general possess more negative attitude than non-tribals. Therefore, the extension worker may find it more difficult to get favourable responses among the tribal as compared to non-tribal communities.

The pre-requisite for future planning therefore should be, firstly, to identify the local leaders and, secondly, to impart them with necessary training with respect to leadership qualities and subject matter in agriculture.

One thing must be kept in mind while selecting the leaders that farming is a way of life for our rural communities. Therefore, the response of our farmers towards any agricultural development programme is greatly influenced by the response of their local leaders. It is a common observation in rural areas that if a local leader in the field of social or religious affairs rejects an innovation in farming, their followers may not look for the advice of their agricultural leaders, rather they will immediately give an unfavourable response to the farming innovation.

Thus, the above discussion leads us to the conclusion that while selecting leaders for training, care must be taken to include local leaders of all kinds. Persons who are leaders in situations other than agriculture may not be of much help as the advocate of change in farming, but they can play a destructive and negative role as rejectors of innovation. Therefore, the analysis of response of such leaders, like traditional, political and social towards agricultural extension programme and their training in the field of improved methods of farming should form an important aspect of the development of leadership in any rural community.

While developing leadership in rural areas like Santal Parganas where both tribal and non-tribal villages are

situated side by side, another point which needs due consideration is that the leadership pattern and response of local leaders towards an extension programme varies considerably in tribal and non-tribal communities. Therefore, the primary requirement of developing leadership in such areas should be to have a separate analysis for the identification of local leaders and their response towards agricultural extension programme. This may be of significance for planning specific approaches for the training and development of tribal and non-tribal leaders.

# BITLAHA : ANALYSIS OF A SANTAL INSTITUTION

SACHCHIDANANDA

*(Received on 31 October 1968)*

**Abstract :** The author describes the Bitlaha institution of the Santals. This is a form of extreme punishment meted out to such offenders as have transgressed the communal code in respect of the taboo against sexual relations inside the clan or outside the tribe.

## I

**B**ITLAHA is a most impressive and unique institution in tribal India. It occurs among the Santal, a large tribe concentrated in northern Orissa, eastern and south-eastern Bihar and the western parts of Bengal. In one district alone in eastern Bihar, which is also known after them as Santal Parganas, they number about eight lakhs. In the entire State, their population exceeds 1.5 millions. They are settled agriculturists occupying plateaux and river valleys. They are skilled earth-workers also. They speak Santali, a language belonging to the Mundari group. In Orissa and Bengal they also speak the regional language. They are a patrilineal and patrilocal community with an elaborate social organization. They are divided into a number of clans (Paris) and sub-clans (Khut). They are a colourful people and are widely known for their wealth of traditions, folk-lore and their ability to bring culturable waste under the plough. They enjoyed a large measure of internal autonomy in which the authority of traditional headmen was strengthened by governmental recognition. Until recently they were largely governed by their own laws and had their own methods of punishment of different kinds of crimes. The kind of punishment differed according to the

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enormity of the crime. The tribe has long attracted the attention of diligent missionaries, administrator-scholars, anthropologists etc. The number of published books and papers on this tribe will probably outnumber those on any other tribe in India.<sup>1</sup> In none of these studies do we find an analysis of Santal culture with modern conceptual tools. In this paper an attempt has been made to examine one of the institutions of the Santal in the strictly functional framework.

## II

In all societies there are certain social values. Belief in these common values keeps the members of the society together. Any breach of these values invites negative reaction on the part of the society. This reaction may be either diffused or organized. In Santal society any sexual relation between two members of the same clan amounts to incest. The punishment for the breach of the social code is the same as that of kin incest. The structural distance between the parties to the incest is not taken into consideration in awarding the punishment and in expiation for the sin committed. The position is different from that obtaining among the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1940) in this regard. The punishment is excommunication, temporary or permanent, for which the village and the Pargana Panchayat is the competent authority. Bitlaha dramatizes the punishment in such a way as to enhance the severity of the sentence hundredfold. It is in the nature of subjection to open expression of reprobation, or derision or ridicule through forcible exposure and by exclusion from full participation in social life and its privileges, including permanent or temporary loss of civic rights. In certain cases of permanent Bitlaha, the offenders suffer social death. They cease to exist for the community as such.

Bitlaha is also resorted to in cases of sexual relation between a Santal and non-Santal. This is an ex-parte affair as the Santals take the decision themselves, the participation of the other party not being essential. The Santals take such an offence as a threat to their tribal integrity and purity. Strictly

speaking, tribal custom should be confined to the tribesmen alone, but there is a tendency to apply the punishment to the offenders of other communities also. The administration takes the view that such a Bitlaha is illegal. Such a Bitlaha at times takes the character of a vendetta against the non-tribal, not only for the most recent offence, but also for feeding fat the all-time grudge against the community as a whole. In the Bitlaha held at Maheshpur in June 1956 firing had to be resorted to. Ten Santals died on the spot. The offender was a Bengali. Twenty thousand Santals had gathered there with deadly weapons. Archer (1946) has reported eighteen cases of Bitlaha between 1920 and 1945 in which one of the parties was a Hindu or a Muslim. There were some more in which one of the parties was a non-Santal tribal.

The incidence of Bitlaha is declining. Archer reports that in each year during his time (1942-46) the number of Bitlaha in which both the parties were Santals ranged between five and fifteen. In the decade 1953-63 only eight Bitlaha (Rai Chowdhry 1965 : 881) were performed and those only in Dumka and Pakur Subdivisions.

### III

Bitlaha is a form of extreme punishment meted out to such offenders as have transgressed the tribal code in respect of the taboo against sexual relations inside the clan or outside the tribe. It is performed by an enormous crowd to the accompaniment and thunder of drums. The crowd advances on the house of the offender in long surging lines. Symbolic defilement of the courtyard is performed. 'It is a disciplined expression of revolted disgust' (Archer 1946). Its savage dignity is a manifestation of the will of the community to assert tribal values. This assertion of tribal values is the character of the institution of Bitlaha.

A large number of people from different villages in the neighbourhood participate in it. They come in response to the *dharwak* signal which is passed from village to village as a call to Bitlaha. *Dharwak* is a twig or branch of *sal* tree with its

leaves stripped to indicate the number of days after which the Bitlaha will be held. One of the leaves is folded into a cone to symbolize the penis and another is pinned into a grove to symbolize the vagina. Men and boys from all over the villages join the crowd with their Manjhi<sup>3</sup> or their assistants. Their number runs into several hundreds. It is the hugeness of the crowd that dwarfs the village and infuses it with awe and terror. As the effect of sculpture cannot be separated from its size, so also the effectiveness of Bitlaha depends very much on the strength of the crowd. The whole area is mobilized into action. The entire resentment of the neighbourhood is focussed on the culprit in his own village. This reinforces forcefully the tribal code. The huge concourse of people constitute the personnel of the institution.

The performance of the Bitlaha is regulated by a set of rules which are meticulously observed. The first move is to secure tribal approval for it. The village headman informs the Pargana<sup>3</sup> on the recommendation of the village and requests him to call a meeting of five Manjhi. This is the reviewing authority and until the village decision is confirmed Bitlaha cannot take place. In case a Manjhi or a village ignores this procedure and announces the Bitlaha, the five Manjhi ask for its justification. If they are unconvinced they fine the erring Manjhi. This fine is known as *Ojok jalat* and is of the same value as the outcaste himself would have to pay in order to be readmitted to the tribe. After the Bitlaha is duly sanctioned, the date for it is fixed by the Manjhi and the Pargana in consultation with the Dihri.<sup>4</sup> The Manjhi then sends a message to the various villages through the *dharwak* signal. In Dumka, Pakur and Rajmahal subdivisions, where the land is covered by hills and forest, it is not possible to recall the *dharwak* once it is issued. In other areas which are more level and open it can be recalled if there is at least one market day before the scheduled date of performance of the Bitlaha.

The crowd assembled for the Bitlaha is met at the entrance of the village by the person at whose instance it is being performed. This is generally the village headman or the Jog



Manjhi.<sup>8</sup> In case there is no one to receive the crowd, it would amount to an insult to the whole area and the Bitlaha may lose its original purpose and the convener of the assembly or even the whole village may be subjected to Bitlaha.

After the assembly settles down, it breaks up into small groups for discussion or entertainment. At night the Dihri arrives and the gathering takes the character of an ad-hoc Hunt council in which matters not connected with the Bitlaha but concerning the general well-being of the entire neighbourhood are discussed. The Dihri sacrifices fowl to appease the deities of the hills and forests. The next morning the Godet<sup>9</sup> is sent to summon the offenders. The facts are laid before the assembly. The tribal law on incest is recounted and its horror impressed upon the people. The assembly is then asked to ratify the decision of Bitlaha. Since the offenders generally stay away, the ratification is a formal affair. If they attend and offer to pay a fine, the Bitlaha may be called off, in case the assembly so decides, in some parts of Santal Parganas. In most parts however this is not possible.

The Dihri then leads the huge concourse with a branch of the *sal* tree in which the leaves are sewn to represent the male and female organs with a soiled leaf-plate attached to the top. Dancers move up and down the village. The drums are beaten and people sing obscene songs. A large number of people enter the house of the offender and urinate on the walls. The cooking pots are broken and people defecate in the courtyard.

All these rules represent the norm of Bitlaha.

The Bitlaha involves the use of artefacts. It has a set of material apparatus without which no activity can take place. The first one is the *dharwak* signal which is circulated from village to village to announce the Bitlaha. This is a branch of *sal* tree in which only such number of leaves are left on the stem as there are days before the performance of the ceremony. Secondly, people who gather for the Bitlaha carry sticks, flutes, buffalo horns, and bows and arrows. The Dihri carries aloft a *sal* branch in which the same sexual motif is prominent

as in the *dharwak* signal. At the top of the branch is fixed a soiled leaf-plate, a worn-out broom or a burnt piece of wood.

The Bitlaha involves a great deal of activity which may be described from the time the assembly gathers on the outskirts of the village. Some of them light the fire, some doze and others entertain themselves with dances. Two or more naked dancers move about. Folk tales with a strong sexual bias are recited and lewd songs are sung. Thus the crowd regales itself for the night. Next day, under the leadership of the Dihri, rows of men dancers advance to the accompaniment of drums. About a dozen drummers and a number of boys with flutes and horns make the scene extremely noisy. After some time they all settle down to hear the case in detail from a visiting Manjhi. Ancient custom is recounted. The offenders are not there. Their excommunication is proclaimed. Members of the assembly are forbidden to have any association with them. They cannot eat or drink, join in any village talk, come near them at any death, trouble or in a festival, nor can any matrimonial relation be established with them. As the people say : 'They will live alone like mongrels, Doms or Sweepers'. The crowd dances before the house of the culprit. People urinate and defecate in the house and then defile it completely. Before the crowd disperses the leader of the assembly offers three fowls at the end of the village, one to Manjhi Harm<sup>7</sup> and one to Maran Buru on behalf of the assembly and the third to Roya Ranji Bonga on behalf of the naked jokers. At the time the fowls are offered the leader explains why the people had gathered and danced ; he also says that by doing so the assembly did not do any wrong.

#### IV

We may now bring out the social functions of this institution. The Bitlaha operations take the character of a hunting expedition. The members of the assembly are armed with bows and arrows, sticks etc. They are the hunters while the culprits are supposed to be the game. Their heinous crime degrades them to the status of beasts. The presence of the Dihri, the dancing, drumming and display of archery feats

makes it a ritual hunt or a *Sendra*. The songs dwell constantly on bestiality. 'We have made them cattle. They have rutted like buffaloes' (Archer 1946). Such are the reactions of the people on incest which invites a Bitlaha.

Secondly, the Bitlaha also symbolizes an *ato-bapla* or a wedding by the village. The Bitlaha crowd is the marriage party. 'The family did not marry them but the people did'. So the people say. The village brings the culprits together, exposes their secret relation and publicises it in the whole area. The leaf emblems of the sexual organs dangling on the *sal* branch and the songs of ridicule composed for the occasion with the names of the guilty couple enhances the enormity of their offence. Their secret love is robbed of all its romance.

Thirdly, the Bitlaha is the worst form of Santal punishment. Santal people want to lead a quiet and contented life in their tribal setting. The Bitlaha gives the culprit unenviable publicity. It pulls him out of his obscure setting and dangles him before the whole region. The exposure to collective shame is one of the most important social functions of this institution. It is more dreaded than physical torture or imprisonment.

Fourthly, this institution expresses the sense of defilement of the whole tribe. A soiled leaf-plate, a worn-out broom or a charred piece of wood symbolizes this in a significant way. The urination and the defecation in the house of the culprit also bring this out. Just as the house is defiled by these acts, the tribe is believed to have been defiled by the conduct of the offenders.

The Bitlaha is itself not the ceremony of outcasting. The offender is already outcasted from the date he was given the option of the fine or from the day he was sentenced to Bitlaha. It is a proclamation that an offence has been committed. The manner of this announcement, however, amounts to a punishment. For the village as for the individual offender, Bitlaha, does not lead to fresh pollution but broadcasts one that exists. Both clan and kin incest pollute the village *bonga*<sup>8</sup> and until the culprits make amends, the pollution cannot be lifted. The village deities cannot be worshipped till the pollution lasts.

Fresh worship may begin after the sacrifice of a goat or fowls in the sacred grove (*Jahar*) and at the shrine of the Manjhi. The animals for the sacrifice have either to be found by the villagers themselves or they may compel the offender to bring these.

Before the Bitlaha, the outcasting is only known to the village. After it, it is common knowledge in the entire area. Bitlaha enlarges the circle of boycott and ensures that not only the village, but the tribe itself shall enforce the penalty. Anybody having any dealing with the outcaste is liable to excommunication. The risk of contamination by contact with the outcaste is also one of the consequences of the Bitlaha.

The dread of Bitlaha is portrayed in a number of Santal folk songs. The Santal views it with despairing submission. The songs depict the anxiety and the dread which dominate the mind of lovers who transgress the moral order. The overwhelming shame the Bitlaha brings, helps maintain the solidarity of the Santal social structure. This is the latent function of Bitlaha.

#### NOTES

1. For a detailed bibliography see Culshaw W. J. : *Tribal Heritage* London, 1949. A number of titles have appeared since such as—  
Biswas, P. C. : *The Santals of Santal Pargana*, 1955.  
Dutta-Majumdar, N. : *Santals*, Calcutta, 1956.  
Orans, Martin : *A Tribe in Search of a Tradition*, 1965.
2. Secular headman of a Santal village.
3. Pargana or Parganait is the head of a number of villages.
4. President of the Hunt Council or the *Disum Eor*. It is the highest court of appeal in the Santal law.
5. One of the two assistants of the village headman.
6. A village official who acts as the messenger.
7. The first headman of the village.
8. Village deity.

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# RIDGE-COUNTS AMONG THE RASTOGIS OF LUCKNOW (U. P.)

SUDHA RASTOGI

B. R. K. SHUKLA

( *Received on 19 June 1968* )

**Abstract :** This paper is based on a study of the a-b ridge-count of 172 Rastogis (85 male and 87 female) of Lucknow (U. P.) It presents the mean a-b ridge-count of both the hands in the two sexes. The bimanual and sexual variation in respect of this trait have also been discussed.

**I**N palmar dermatoglyphics a number of criteria have been employed in comparative analysis and in ethnic evaluation of different populations. The criteria based on the metrical approach present some methodological problems in handling the data, especially, in view of the fact that the growth of the palm goes on hand in hand with other parts of the body. Chattopadhyay (1966) has demonstrated that the distance between the two triradii 'increases with age' and there is sexual variation in the palmar growth pattern especially beyond eleven years of age. Fang (1950) and Pons (1964) have pointed out that the distance between the two triradii, if expressed in terms of ridge-counts rather than the metrical measurement, which no doubt is possible, could serve as a better tool in any anthropological and genetical study in ethnic evaluation. Furthermore, Pons (1964) has pointed out the genetical nature of this quantitative expression of the palmar phenotype. It has been stated that a high a-b ridge-count is controlled by a dominant gene with varying degrees of penetration, so as to give rise to a wide range of spectrum. Fang (1950) has classified the total a-b ridge-counts

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of the two palms of an individual into low value and high value. A ridge count of 78 or below is termed as 'low' and if it exceeds 78 it is termed as 'high' (ibid.).

A number of investigators have reported a-b.ridge-counts of different populations of the world. The important studies are those of Baitsch and Schwarzfischer (1959), Bonnevie (1961), Fang (1951), Pons (1964). But very little work has been done on Indian populations, particularly in Uttar Pradesh. Datta (1961); Seth (1963); Bhattacharya (1966); Mitra (1966); Chattopadhyay and Das Sharma (1966); Srivastava and Shukla (1966); Bhanu and Malhotra (1967); Bansal (1966); Shukla and Srivastava (in press), have conducted studies on certain Indian populations. In view of the paucity of data from other populations the present paper attempts to report on the total a-b ridge-count among the Rastogis.

Rastogis are said to represent one of the subdivisions of the broader group of Vaishyas and mainly inhabit the north-western part of Uttar Pradesh. In general they represent an endogamous group.

### *Material and Methods*

The present paper is based on the palmar prints of 172 un-related Rastogis (85 male and 87 female) obtained from the different localities of Lucknow.

For counting the ridges the usual methods suggested by Cummins and Midlo (1961 : 74) were employed.

### *Results*

The mean a-b ridge-count of the two sexes separately, is given in Table 1. A glance at this table indicates that the total ridge-count of both the palms is slightly higher in males than in females. (See Fig.) The range of the mean values in the two palms separately is higher in males than in females. However, on an average, Rastogis have 75.26 as their mean a-b ridge-count with a standard deviation of 10.73 which accounts for the extent of scattering from the mean value.

When statistically treated by applying student's *t*-test, it is noted that (at 5 per cent level of significance the value of *t* is 1.96) the present sample does not exhibit any sexual variation in so far as the a-b ridge-counts are concerned. On the other hand, the present study also fails to record any bimanual difference in either sex (cf. Table 1).

TABLE 1

*Mean a-b ridge-count of the Rastogis of Lucknow*

Sex	Total no.	Right	Left	Total	
				Mean $\pm$ S. E.	S. D. $\pm$ S. E.
Male	85	36.9	39.4	76.13 $\pm$ 1.19	11.04 $\pm$ 0.84
Female	87	36.3	37.5	74.39 $\pm$ 1.10	10.84 $\pm$ 0.77
Average	172	36.6	38.45	75.26 $\pm$ 0.82	10.73 $\pm$ 0.58

The different populations which have been studied from the point of view of a-b ridge-counting have been listed in Table 3. A comparative evaluation of the mean values with their statistical constants indicates that it ranges from 68.19 to 82.89. Rastogis with the average a-b ridge-count of 75.26 fall in the normal range and show approximations to the Indians of Andhra Pradesh. Since data from other Uttar Pradesh populations is lacking, the ethnic evaluation of Rastogis cannot be attempted on the basis of a-b ridge-counting; nevertheless it needs a recording for future evaluation.

TABLE 2

*The value of 't' for sexual difference with respect to a-b ridge-counting among the Rastogis of Lucknow*

Groups	Rastogis (present sample)	
	Male	Female
Male	—	1.07
Female	1.07	—

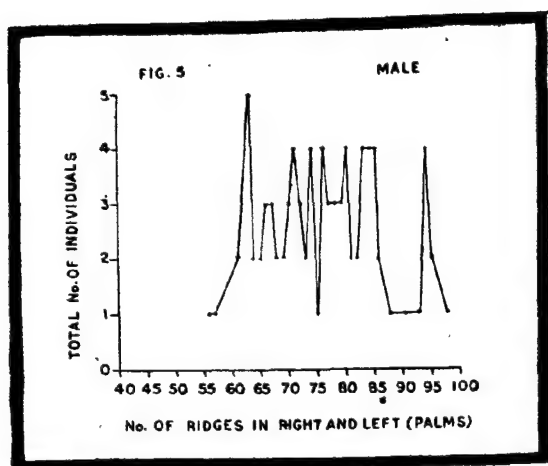
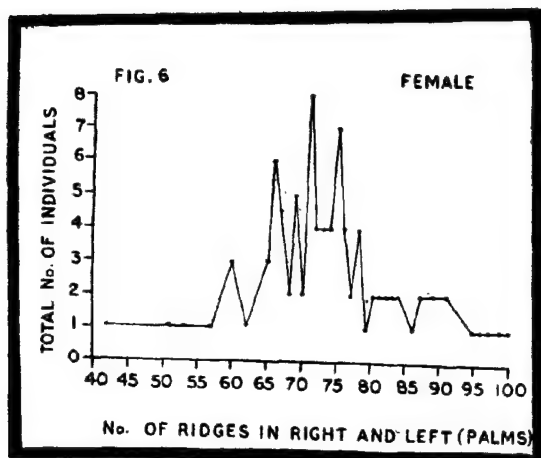
THE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL  $\alpha$ - $\beta$  RIDGE COUNTTHE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL  $\alpha$ - $\beta$  RIDGE COUNT



TABLE 3

*The value of mean a-b ridge counting in certain populations*

Ethnic group	Sex	Total No.	Mean $\pm$ S.E.	S.D. $\pm$ S.E.	Investigator
Indians of Andhra	M	80	76.92	8.1	Datta, 1961
Indians of Punjab	F	88	80.68	9.08	Seth, 1962
	M	62	76.42	12.48	
	Av.	100	78.04	11.41	
Maharashtrians of India	F	73	76.82 $\pm$ 0.93	7.92 $\pm$ 0.65	Bansal, 1966
	M	72	82.89 $\pm$ 0.65	5.51 $\pm$ 0.46	
	Av.	145	79.83 $\pm$ 1.24	14.91 $\pm$ 0.87	
Purbia Chamars	M	46	71.92	1.38	Srivastava and Shukla, 1966
Gujar Pasis	M	42	68.19	1.45	"
Pathans	M	50	80.09 $\pm$ 1.56	1.53 $\pm$ 1.10	Shukla and Srivastava (In press)
Rastogis of Lucknow	M	85	76.13 $\pm$ 1.19	11.04 $\pm$ 0.84	Present study
	F	87	74.39 $\pm$ 1.10	10.34 $\pm$ 0.77	
	Av.	172	75.26 $\pm$ 0.82	10.73 $\pm$ 0.58	

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Srivastava, A. C.

## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

### I. The Concept of Class : Marx and Weber (A Comment)

In his paper on 'Class and Caste' (*The Economic Weekly*, August 25, 1965), Professor N. K. Bose has drawn a distinction between the Marxian and the Weberian interpretations of the concept of class. He has suggested that while Marx used the concept of class as an operational instrument rather than as a descriptive term, Weber tried to find out a suitable definition of the term **class** so that the widest range of observed phenomena might be covered under it with precision. This understanding of the distinction between the Weberian and the Marxian use of the concept of class appears to overlook the more important distinction between the two approaches.

In our view the more fundamental distinction between the Weberian and the Marxian views of class is related to the fundamentally divergent problems taken up by them for analysis. The central problem for Marx, in his own words, is the analysis of the 'economic law of motion of modern society' and the concept of class in his hands is an analytical tool for this specific purpose. Weber, and a whole generation of sociologists since Weber, have, on the other hand, tried to make the concept of class serviceable for other purposes, more importantly, for the analysis of social stratification.<sup>1</sup>

Professor Bose has argued that the Marxian distinction between 'producers and non-producers' is not capable of neat empirical identification. There is no doubt that in reality there may be, and there always is, a considerable overlap and inter-mixture of social classes.

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The article is a comment upon the Editor's article entitled 'Class and Caste' published in *Man in India*, Vol. 45, No. 4,

Marx also is not oblivious of the existence of 'complicated gradations' within a class, which may be of considerable importance from the standpoint of having a realistic picture of social stratification. He notes the differences in 'the size of the purse' among members of the same class and so also the existence of 'diverse occupations' within a class.<sup>3</sup> These differences, according to Marx, are not of *crucial* importance when one analyses the dynamics of the capitalist system.

Further, the 'class structure' in its 'pure form' is the product of abstraction attempted by the social scientist and as such it is never in full accord with reality in all its details. The concept is based on what the scientist regards as the most essential aspects of reality. Such abstraction is, however, the very essence of scientific procedure. Total accord with the real situation in all its details is never possible; at best it amounts to puerile empiricism, nay, sheer factualism. Any scientific concept is of value if it illuminates vital aspects of reality in relation to the problem taken up by the social scientist for analysis. This procedure is clearly indicated by Marx in the following passage :

'The economic structure of modern society is indisputably most highly and classically developed in England. But even here the class structure does not appear in a pure form. Intermediate and transitional strata obscure the class boundaries even in this case, though very much less in the country than in the towns. However, this is immaterial for our analysis. We have seen that the constant tendency, the law of development of the capitalist mode of production, is to separate the means of production increasingly from labour, and to concentrate the scattered means of production more and more into large aggregates, thereby transforming labour into wage labour and the means of production into capital.'<sup>3</sup>

The validity of the Marxian concept of class depends very much on the empirical validity of the tendency of the 'law' to which Marx has drawn attention in the above passage.

In a nutshell, the view that 'class in the Marxian sense is an intellectual instrument of action and not a pure description of social phenomena into which Weber tried to convert it,'<sup>4</sup>

does not do full justice to the methodology of Karl Marx. In our opinion, the principal distinction between Marx and Weber lies in that **class** in the Marxian sense is a tool for the analysis of the 'laws' of motion of society and not for a 'pure description' of social stratification into which Weber tried to convert it. True, Marx believed not merely in interpreting the world but in changing it. But, according to him, the strategy of change is to be based on the analysis of the 'laws' of motion of that society which one wishes to change.

Marx's concept of class has been effectively used for analysing various forms of transition from feudalism to capitalism in both European and non-European societies. The point to investigate is how far his concept can be successfully employed to analyse and explain the dynamics of the present-day developed and underdeveloped societies.

P. C. Joshi

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II. The following communication has been received from Dr. Bafe de Crespigny, Secretary-General of the 28th International Congress of Orientalists :

The 28 International Congress of Orientalists will be held at the Australian National University, Canberra, A.C.T.,

from 6th to 12th January, 1971. All scholars of the languages, history, literature and culture of Asia are welcome.

Enquiries should be addressed to :

The Secretary-General,  
28 International Congress of Orientalists,  
Australian National University Post Office,  
Via CANBERRA CITY. A.C.T. 2601. AUSTRALIA.

III. Dear Sir,

This is to bring your kind notice that in the introductory section of the paper entitled 'Anthropometry of the Kaibartta of Assam' by Bhuban Mohan Das and Madhu Sudan Das published in your esteemed Quarterly journal *Man in India*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (January-March 1969) it is stated that the main concentration of the Kaibartta is found in the districts of Kamrup and Nowgong. But to be more correct it should have been Nowgong and Sibsagar. It is seen in the Census publication of Assam, 1961, Vol. III, Part V-A, that the distribution of the Kaibartta population in Assam (plains) is as follows :—

Goalpara = 11,203 ; Kamrup = 19,044 ; Darrang = 23,052 ;  
Lakhimpur = 30,500 ; Nowgong = 34,005 ; Sibsagar = 53,099 ;  
Cachar = 8,565.

It may be pointed out that their distribution in the hill districts of Assam is insignificant.

Shillong, 19 May 1969

Anil Kumar Paul  
(Investigator,  
Census Office,  
P. O. Shillong-I,  
Assam)

IV. To The Editor,  
MAN IN INDIA

Sir,

In Zillur Khan's article 'Cultural Fusion : a case study of St. Martin's Island in the Bay of Bengal' (Vol. 48, p. 307, 1968, Oct.-Dec.), it is stated that the island was first settled in 1880 by 14 families. Its area is 9 square miles and its population 927 (1962).

The density of population is high, being 103 per sq. mile. Dividing its population 927 by 5, the number of families is 186. If the growth of population during the 8 decades from 1880 to 1960 is purely biological, the rate of growth is some 37 or 38 per cent per decade. This is a very high rate of growth. The 14 families who migrated to St. Martin in 1880 are very likely not to have had older men and women among them. If instead of taking 5 men per family as the average, we take 4 persons per family, then the rate of increase per decade would be higher.

Apart from stray immigration of males by shipwreck or boat-wreck like that of the Maulavi and two fishermen who died of thirst, there must have been some voluntary immigration of both males and females.

The point requires elucidation : What are the birth and death rates in the island ? What is the economic productivity of its inhabitants ? What is the age composition of its population ?

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J. M. Datta

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Southeast Asian Tribes, Minorities, and Nations.** Edited by Peter Kunstadter. Vol. I, pp. xiv + 486 : Vol. II, pp. viii + 487 to 902 + 15 maps + plates. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, U.S. 1967. \$ 22.50.

These two volumes have been published under the auspices of the Princeton Center of International Studies. The Introduction by the Editor (72 pages) is followed by sections on the following countries : Burma, China, India, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam. Each part is again accompanied by an introduction by the Editor. The last part, no. IX of the book, deals with the role of private foundations. Thus chapter 21 is entitled 'The Asia Foundation's Programming for 'Tribal and Minority Peoples in Southeast Asia'. There is finally an appendix on 'Population and Linguistic Application of Ethnic Groups of Cambodia'.

The chapter on India contains an account of the relation between 'Tribesmen and Low-landers of Assam' contributed by Robbins Burling.

On going through the volumes carefully one is impressed by the mass of information which has been collected with regard to the countries and communities involved. But one is, at the same time, struck by the singular character of the data collected. The special purpose of the authors, in many cases, seems to have been to discover the tensions or antagonisms which are present in their specific areas of study, and not so much in finding out where points of mutual aid or of co-operation lie between various communities. The difficulties by which the States are faced are painted in bolder relief than the successes which they have scored in the matter of incorporation of tribal economies and of cultures within larger organizations.

Some of the chapters like chapter 14 and 15 on the 'Hill Tribe Program of Public Welfare' and on 'The Tribal Research Center in Thailand' are of special interest, and may prove useful to other countries as well, when the latter are faced by analogous problems.

If we accept the essentially defence-orientation of the present



publication, and also of its frank anti-communist interests, particularly in relation to Viet-Nam, we should admit that the authors, and the Editor in particular, have done a good job indeed. But one can ask oneself the question, whether there could not be a more objective, and even more penetrating, analysis of inter-communal relationships than what has been gathered here under the stress of political and military needs.

N. K. Bose

**Sorcery in Its Social Setting.** By Dr. M. G. Marwick. Pp. 339 including index, bibliography and appendices. Manchester University Press. 45 shillings nett.

This book is a study of the Northern Rhodesian 'Cewa', a matrilineal Bantu-speaking people of eastern central Africa.

The theme of the book was sketched in a paper by the author published in Africa in 1952. Dr. Marwick, who was until recently Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, is now Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at Monash University, Australia. The book contains a foreword by Dr. Max Gluckman. It is not merely a monograph on one tribe, but presents also a careful analysis of existing studies on sorcery and on conflicts in general. The author has also given various data, and his quantitative and statistical analysis are particularly useful. This fascinating analysis of both social system and beliefs will undoubtedly help research workers in the field, and present an interesting reading for general readers. Appendices and bibliography also add to the value of the book. The study of the life and death of the headman of Gombi forms a very interesting chapter.

Salil K. Roy Chowdhury

**Researches into the Early History of Mankind and the Development of Civilization.** By Edward B. Tylor, edited and abridged with an introduction by Paul Bohannon, published in the Sociology Series as Classics in Anthropology by Phoenix Books. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1964. Pp. 295 with index. \$2.95 or 21s. net.

This book requires no introduction as it is one of the 19th century classics in anthropology with which Edward B. Tylor created a revolution in the pursuit of the science. This work is now introduced in the popular Phoenix edition and will thus be available

to the reading public at a cheap price. The book includes the vital and important chapters in which Tylor laid down his theories about the development and growth of human culture.

Salil K. Roy Chowdhury

**The Caste System of Northern India : with special reference to the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh.** By E. A. H. Blunt. Pp. X + 374 S. Chand & Co. Ram Nagar, Delhi—1. 1969. Rs. 30.00.

Mr. E.A.H. Blunt's book was originally published in 1931 when it was very well received. Since that date there has grown a considerable interest among anthropologists in the caste system. They are now concerned, not so much with the origin and history of caste, as with the manner in which it actually works in the life of the people of India. In other words, they are interested more in the histology and physiology of the institution rather than its palaeontology, if, of course, we are permitted to use these terms from the biological sciences.

Yet, Mr. Blunt's book remains one of the best morphological accounts of the caste system in any one part of India. He was personally in charge of census operations in U.P. in 1911, and has had considerable experience in the province where he served as an administrator.

Although the author says that he has largely depended on Crooke's *Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, there is ample evidence that many new things have been added, while the historical reconstruction is, of course, his own. The chapters relating to Muslim ethnic groups and castes, the description of panchayats, the relationship between caste, occupation and law, form some of the most valuable chapters in the book. Mr. Blunt's description of how castes have proliferated by absorption and by fission also forms one of his important contributions.

The publishers have done well by reprinting this very useful book when there is so much new interest in India's ancient social system.

N. K. Bose

**Nagin, Story of the short life of Nagin Parekh.** By Evelyn Wood, Foreword by Dr. Irawati Karve. Published by Dhananjay M. Parekh, Bombay 12, Pp. XVIII + 179.

Nagin Parekh was a young man educated in Burma, India and Oxford who eventually joined the Sarvodaya Movement in Koraput,

Orissa, where he finally laid down his life. He seems to have been a man endowed with remarkable sensitivity and high intellectual qualification. In his own work of organization of co-operatives, he brought to bear a scientific discipline which is rare among social workers.

The book of tributes paid to him by numerous admirers and co-workers is enriched by extracts from letters and reports contributed by Nagin Parekh from time to time. He faced difficulties arising, firstly, from the isolated nature of the tribal communities among whom his lot was cast. Secondly, classes in enjoyment of financial or social interests living in that area were responsible for promoting hostility against any programme which was likely to liberate the masses from their bondage. Thirdly, the Orissa Government also seem to have added to his difficulties, either on account of misunderstanding and lack of sympathy, or due to reasons in which they were justified from their own point of view.

In the end, Nagin Parekh arrived at some very important conclusions as a result of his experience. One of the reasons of failure, according to him was as follows. 'From the very beginning, our entire attitude was a reflection of our desire to uplift the down-trodden *adivasis* rather than to help them to develop through their own effort and in their own way.' (P. 165.) While admitting that the Land-gift or *Bhoodan* movement had not been successful in Koraput, he says. 'If we believe that whatever has been gained through the movement is the result of its underlying human values, we also realize that *Bhoodan*, in terms of a lost opportunity, is the direct outcome of the absence of a scientific approach towards the problems of rural development on the part of the workers of the movement.' (P. 164.)

His constructive suggestions naturally arise out of these. He finally recommended : 'Whatever claim a private agency may make, its approach must reflect finally a combination of both an official and a non-official role. Laying down the minimum in each field of activity, according to the willingness and capacity of the people, and also trying to go a little beyond, by fixing reasonable targets with the help of its workers, demonstrates the possible directions of change.' (P. 167.)

We believe that this beautiful book should prove to be of great interest to all social workers whose task is to promote the development of rural and tribal India.

N. K. Bose

**Kṛṣṇa in History and Legend.** By Bimanbehari Majumdar, Centre of Advanced Study, Department of Ancient History and Culture, Calcutta University, 51/2 Hazra Road, Calcutta-19, 1969. Pp. XV. 307. Rs. 20.00.

Professor Majumdar introduces the book in the following words : 'A student of history, who is at the same time an humble devotee of Kṛṣṇa by heredity, environment and conviction, makes an attempt here to trace the development of the ideas relating to Kṛṣṇa from the days of the *Chandogya Upanisad* to the present time.' He brings to his task a maturity of scholarship and a critical ability in the sifting of evidence which is of a very high order.

From time to time there have been attempts to dismiss the Krishna legend as a myth, as a survival of some pre-Aryan primitive cult and so on. Some scholars have also accepted the historicity of the personage in question, but have differed from one another in their assessment of facts, as well as in regard to the historical conclusions drawn. Dr. Majumdar reviews the work of these scholars with great ability. But what is most refreshing in regard to his own findings is that he does not depart from the strict principles of historical research, and is not swayed by any likes or dislikes of his own.

These lectures were delivered at the Centre of Advanced Study in the Department of Indian History and Culture, University of Calcutta. That Department and its Head, Professor D. C. Sircar, deserve our congratulation for having sponsored the series, as well as for its quick publication.

N. K. Bose

**Indian Civilization, The Formative Period, A Study of Archaeology as Anthropology.** By S. C. Malik, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Rashtrapati Nivas, Simla—5. 1968. Pp. X+204. Rs. 20/ \$ 8.00/45s.

A book like this had to written, for Indian archaeology has, on the whole, limited itself to a description of things, and has disregarded the larger task of reconstruction of the way of life of the people whose

remains or artifacts are laid bare by excavation. Dr. S. C. Malik has shown where the shortcoming lies, and he has also tried to pool together the available information and clothe the skeleton furnished by archaeologists with flesh, blood and life.

The three chapters entitled Introduction, the Background, and History, Archaeology and Anthropology contain a statement of his views as well as of his logic. These are preceded by a criticism of the present trends in the practice of Indian archaeology.

Then he turns to the Formative Period of Indian Civilization, in which he tries to present a reconstruction of society in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods in India. In the next chapter entitled Culture Areas, Regionalism and Archaeology, he tries to show how ecology, political history and cultural diversification have been closely intertwined with one another.

On the whole, his effort is praiseworthy : certainly his view that archaeological facts must be made to serve in the production of a total picture of the life of a people deserves support. But the feeling of the reviewer has been that some of the reconstructions of the author have perhaps overstepped the limits of legitimate speculation. Thus the un-variable character of Harappan writing over centuries has led him to conclusions about the socio-economic facets of Harappan civilization which seem to hang on rather slender strings. Yet, in justification, one can say that speculations of this kind are provocative ; although one would have been happier if such speculations had been kept within the bounds of minimal hypotheses.

The book could perhaps have been improved by less of quotations ; particularly if the views or logic of other authors had largely been summarized by Dr. Malik himself in his own words, and references given to the sources of the views expressed.

In spite of these minor shortcomings, we are sure Dr. Malik's book will provide stimulating reading to archaeologists and anthropologists alike.

N. K. Bose

**Hindu Castes and Sects.** By Jogendra Nath Bhattacharya, M.A., D. L., Reprinted 1968. Pp. 496, Published by Editions Indian, 59A Shambazar Street, Calcutta-4. Printed at the Temple Press, 2 Nyayaratna Lane, Calcutta-4. Rs. 40.00.

The book was first published in 1896, and has long been out of

print. The publishers have done a public service in reprinting the almost pioneer classic on Hindu Castes and Sects by a Western-educated Hindu. The author was fully conversant with the traditional *Shashtric* aspect of the system with which many of the social scientists of today are not familiar because of their ignorance of Sanskrit. In reprinting the book, the original pagination could not be kept, because of cost and typographical improvements ; but the old paginations are given in the text within brackets—so with very little effort one can find the references quickly.

The writer has not feared to call a spade a spade. Macaulay calls Maharaja Nanda Kumar a 'Brahman of Brahmins.' But he was in fact a middle class Rarhiya Brahman whose family had once been outcasted, and regained their status by a humiliating and expensive ceremony of expiation. Rabindra Nath Tagore has shed a lustre on on the illustrious Tagore family. But he was a *Pirali* Brahman by birth. 'Of the several classes degraded by alleged intercourse with Mahomadians, the Piralis of Bengal are the most important.'

Ever since Sir George Grierson wrote that two-thirds of Hindu India are worshippers of Vishnu in some form or other, an impression has gained ground that other sects are dwindling. Dr. Bhattacharya notices :—'The majority of the Vaidiks, Rarhis and Barendras (among the Brahmins of Bengal) are moderate Saktas. They worship all the ancient deities of the Hindu pantheon ; but Durga, Kali and Siva have the largest share of their devotion' (p. 34). The Gosains of Nabadwip, descendants of the father of Vishnupriya—the second wife of Lord Gauranga are Saktas ; so are the Gosains of Khardah.

The number of Saktas and Vaishnavas are almost equal in Bengal. In the old Madras Presidency, the Saivites and the Vishnuvites are almost equal.

The book is informative, illuminating and thought-provoking. After going through the book, the intelligent reader will, like Oliver Twist, ask for a 'little more'. And if he is diligent he will pursue the the subject elsewhere. We hope and pray all social scientists should read the book.

J. M. Datta

**Pre And Protohistory of the Berach Basin, South Rajasthan.** By V. N. Misra, Deccan College Postgraduate Research Institute, Poona, 1967, Pp. 1-216. Illustrated. Rs. 45.00.

The above volume embodies the results of intensive exploration

carried out by the author in 1963-64 in the Berach Valley in S. E. Rajasthan. Work done earlier on both sides of the Aravallis is incorporated in the book.

Divided into 7 chapters, the book gives a comprehensive account of the tool-industries of the Early, Middle and Late Stone Age of the Berach basin (chapters III to V). The first short chapter deals with the land and the second with river stratigraphy and cultural sequence. The last two chapters deal with the proto-historic Ahar culture and the place of the Berach basin in the pre- and proto-history of Rajasthan respectively.

The river stratigraphy and cultural sequence as given by the author show that the Acheulian (described as Early Stone Age), whose type tool is, the handaxe, is stratigraphically correlated with the Bouldery gravel bed which overlies the bed-rock or its weathered products. This is the oldest lithic industry in S. E. Rajasthan. Next in sequence are the so-called Middle Stone Age (Middle Palaeolithic?) industries stratigraphically correlated with the deposit of sandy gravels, separated from the former by a deposit of mottled clay. Whereas the Acheulian in Rajasthan has a wide and well-defined distribution, the Middle Stone Age industries are much less known. These latter industries typologically include cores, plain and faceted flakes and flake tools (mainly scrapers). The so-called Late Stone Age industries represented by microlithic blades and fluted cores are not found in any stratigraphical context, and are widely scattered over a large area. Whether the Late Stone Age can be equated with the Mesolithic has to be examined in the context of an overall framework of prehistoric chronology of India.

The Early and Middle Stone Age industries have been typologically described in technical details and statistically examined (chapters III-V). The Chi-square and 't'-test have been applied to study the variability within the industries with some interesting results. The Early and Middle Stone Age industries show marked differences in respect of their main tool-types, in the proportion of core/flake components and in retouched/unretouched tools. In respect of the material attributes of the flakes, the aforesaid industries show statistically significant differences. A large number of histograms and tables have been appended. All these are commendable features of the book under review. Necessarily,

however the validity of the application of the statistical methods must rest on a much larger data from *well-dated stratigraphic horizons*.

The Ahar culture is a rich proto-historic (Copper Age) village-farming culture of Rajasthan discovered in the early fifties. The type-site Ahar was re-excavated in 1961-62 under the direction of Dr. H. D. Sankalia. Dr. Misra collected a sizable number of pottery characteristic of the Ahar culture by surface exploration on which the present study (chapter VI) is based. Necessarily the inferences drawn from this evidence are tentative. The diagnostic trait of the culture is black-and-red ware with a variety of linear and dotted designs in white against a black background. The earliest occurrence of black-and-red ware is known from the Harappan culture in Gujarat. According to the author, the black-and-red pottery was diffused from S. W. to N. E., from Gujarat and Malwa to South Rajasthan. The existence of copper ores near Udaipur may have been an important factor for the early colonization of the Aharians in the Banas Valley.

The reviewer has some comments to make regarding the stratigraphy and cultural sequence (chapter II). The basal gravels in the Berach are described as bouldery gravels, whereas those in the tributary streams are described as pebbly gravels and in relevant sections they are marked with different symbols. The diameter of the gravels in the former varies between 5 cm. to 20 cm. whereas that in the latter varies between 5 cm. to 18 cm. Thus the difference is too slight to admit the use of different geological nomenclatures and symbols. These consolidated deposits may perhaps be better described as Boulder (or cobble) conglomerate. Table I (p. 16) needs some revision. As the terms Early and Middle Stone Age are chronological in the archaeological sense, they are required to be correlated with geological stratigraphy as has been attempted by the author in his studies of the river sections. In the aforesaid table, however, the Early and Middle Stone Age industries of Wagan are both correlated with pebbly gravel, whereas in all the other river sections, only the Early Stone Age industries are correlated (and rightly so) with the same deposit. Again, in the said table, under Kadwali, the Early Stone Age is placed along with the Middle Stone Age which is geologically correlated with fine sandy gravel. In the



same column (Kadmali), the Middle Stone Age is erroneously correlated with the mottled clay which is devoid of tools in the region. Unless corrected, these may confuse scholars for whom the book is intended. In the concluding chapter, however, the author has given a clearer picture of correlations in general.

For relative dating, the author states that he has no direct evidence—by which he means palaeontological evidence. Since fossils are lacking in the region, the depositional and erosional phases and implied climatic change, if any, may be explored. The author has presented useful stratigraphic data revealing a succession of characteristic sedimentary deposits like gravels, silt and clay but he has not described any erosional phases. The author must have observed unconformities or disconformities in the stratigraphic pattern of the Berach basin. By typologically comparing palaeontologically dated sites in Central India and the Deccan, he has tentatively dated the Early and Middle Stone Age industries of Rajasthan as Middle and Middle to Upper Pleistocene respectively. This method of dating, however tentative, may lead to confusion in relative chronology. The Lower (or Early) Pleistocene remains unaccounted for.

The reviewer feels that the scope of the book need not have been extended to include the Ahar culture (ch. VI) which is not a logical successor of the Late Stone Age microlithic industries in Rajasthan. There is no historical link between the two. It is however interesting to note that no farming culture earlier than the Ahar is yet known in N. E. Rajasthan. The author has done a painstaking job in presenting in a very systematic manner a substantial body of artefactual data obtained by sustained field-work and has ably and firmly placed Rajasthan, once *terra incognita*, on the prehistoric map of India. Further geological field-work, as the author proposes, may yield appropriate data for reconstructing the pleistocene chronology of the Berach basin.

The text is well illustrated and clearly printed. The price, however, is a little too high, perhaps due to a large number of photographic plates which embellish the publication.

D. Sen

**The Teaching of Social Sciences in India (1947-67).** By Humayun Kabir, C. N. Vakil, A. Appadorai, H. P. Maiti, C. H. Alexandrowicz, S. Mathai, S. V. Kogekar, D. N. Majumdar, G. S. Ghurye, G. K. Ojha, Pp. 727. Universal Book and Stationery Co., Delhi-6. 1968. Rs. 45.00

This 'pamphlet' or 'booklet', as stated in the anonymous preface of the volume, aims at providing general information and a guide for social scientists and students interested in teaching and learning social sciences in the Indian Universities. The present document grew out of Unesco surveys and regional conferences and forms part of a 'series of national booklets'.

There is a part II though the table of contents of the book does not show any part I, and in his introduction to part II Pandit G. K. Ojha (one of the contributors to this compilation) claims that the volume incorporates the latest information up to the end of 1967. In the language of Pandit Ojha, 'Readers seeking the latest and detailed information on teaching of social sciences in Indian Universities may refer to this volume with pleasant anticipations which, we hope, will be amply fulfilled.' I started reading the book with real 'pleasant anticipations' but, with apologies to Pandit Ojha, they were never fulfilled. I read the sections on anthropology and had such hard times to go through them that I did not like to read the other sections of the book. There is neither any up-to-date information in the anthropology sections of this book nor are the discussions representative or objective. There are, rather, some unsuccessful and undue attempts to glorify a small group of old-generation anthropologists.

The information has been presented in such a way as if the writer is always guessing the facts. The essays say more about a small group of teachers, most of whom died before the sixth decade of the century, and their almaters and personal contact with some professors of international reputation rather than about their works and the teaching itself. Wherever there is any mention of their work the description is miserly abbreviated and there has been virtually no attempt to evaluate the works and interests of those teachers whose names appear and reappear in the discussion. The report is unjustly silent about the teaching and research interests of the contemporary Indian anthropologists and makes many mis-statements, over-statements and undocumented statements. For example we may illustrate, 'In India with its huge number of groups in all

stages of culture there is no room for distinguishing and clearly separating social anthropology from sociology'. (P. 158.) It is not quite understandable what the 'number of groups in all stages of of culture' has to do in distinguishing or separating social anthropology from sociology. And, I am sure, the author of the essay knows that there are a number of universities and institutions in India where differences between sociology and anthropology are not only made, they are well recognized and treated as distinct disciplines.

Referring to Prof. D. N. Majumdar, the book says, 'He has been actively connected with prison reform in the United Provinces and has included a whole paper on crime with M.A. course.' (P. 158.) I don't know how far this statement is correct, as the syllabus of Lucknow University (given at pp. 594-681 of the book) where, as far as I know Prof. Majumdar taught, does not show any paper as crime or criminology. Regarding Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyaya of the Calcutta University the writer of the essay says, 'Since his return to anthropology Professor Chattopadhyaya has been carrying on work which clearly indicates that his view of social anthropology is precisely the same as that of some American anthropologists'. (P. 157.) It is difficult to get anything out of such a statement. Nowhere in the volume is there any detailed reference to that group of American anthropologists whom Prof. Chattopadhyaya endorsed, nor does it say specifically what is the view of Prof. Chattopadhyaya or the group of American anthropologists on social anthropology. The writer does not cite any reference of Prof. Chattopadhyaya, nor does he try to justify the validity of his statement. I do not know what prevented the writer of the essay from qualifying or supporting his statement ; I suppose not space of this 727-page volume. Moreover, I was rather surprised to see that throughout the essay the author gives the impression that Prof. Chattopadhyaya is the present Head of the Department of Calcutta University, though he passed away in 1963.

Prof. Majumdar's essay, 'Special Report on the Teaching of Social Anthropology' is more representative than the other anthropology essays, though it is not very well integrated. It would, however, be more appropriate if he had said 'Trends of Social Anthropology from an Indian's point of view', than 'Trends of Social Anthropology from the Indian point of view.' Because, I am sure,

quite a few Indian anthropologists, including the reviewer, would not like to ditto all the comments that Prof. Majumdar had made in his essay, by and large, reads well, though the reader gets the feel that the author neglects paying any attention to the documentation aspect of writing. The last part of his essay on 'Teaching of Social Anthropology' is too sketchy. There Prof. Majumdar talks more of research than teaching and almost ignores the contribution of young Indian anthropologists in the field. His discussion of recent anthropological trends in India is not very exhaustive either.

Prof. Kabir's general introduction to the volume is scholarly, well knit, and enhances the value of the publication considerably. He, first of all, analyses the three traditions of Indian educational system in historical depth and under this background depicts the need for and process of growth of social sciences in India.

There are many typographical errors, particularly in the spelling of names. A careful editing of the volume could provide at least an uninterrupted reading.

A. K. Danda